

Security and Securitization in Israel

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Introduction

The State of Israel has faced many security challenges since its founding in 1948. Located in a hostile environment where there are no democratic regimes, and surrounded by Arab countries which immediately after its establishment were declared a war of annihilation, the State of Israel, which is the only democracy in the Middle East, has faced more existential threats than any other country across the globe (Freilich, 2019, p. 21). According to Michael (2009, p. 689), these kinds of threats "can be defined as a trend, process or development that substantially endangers the existence of the state of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people". Thus, for 73 years since its establishment, the State of Israel has participated in seven wars, conducted hundreds of military operations, and even destroyed two nuclear reactors of enemy states. It would be accurate to argue that the State of Israel, which is in a routine state of emergency, is a classic case of a state that regularly faces security threats, some even existential. This claim stems from the perception of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, who claimed that if Israel was defeated once on the battlefield, it would be the sad end of the Jewish state that would be destroyed by its enemies (Ben-Israel, 2013, pp. 65-66). Therefore, the author of this thesis argues that the State of Israel is a classic case study to examine how a state deals with existential security threats, a process which is manifested theoretically with the help of Securitization Theory.

In essence, Securitization Theory is one of the key contemporary International Relations (IR) and Security Studies theories as it describes the process of how normal policy issues are transformed into security issues. In adopting constructivist approach

to the study of security that perceives threats subjectively, Securitization Theory was developed in a broader attempt to redefine the concept of security, as it introduces a wider security perception, which comprises not only military security but also political, societal, economic, and environmental security. Nevertheless, although the Copenhagen School's original approach has enhanced the theoretical understanding of the construction of security issues (Buzan, Waever and De-Wilde, 1998), there are still elements in the theory that require theoretical development. One of these elements is the audience component, which has an essential role for executing a securitization act (Buzan, Waever and De-Wilde, 1998; Balzacq, 2005; Roe, 2008; Leonard and Kaunert, 2011; Cote, 2016). In that sense, Balzacq, Leonard and Ruzicka (2015, p. 8) suggest that "as long as the criteria of the audience remains unspecified, it will be difficult for researchers to establish the merits of one explanation over another".

By supporting the argument above, as Securitization Theory continues to develop, this thesis argues that the audience dimension deserves further attention, especially in relation to the question of how to identify who the relevant audiences are that need to be convinced for performing a successful securitization act. Hence, asserting that the CS' original framework must be ameliorated for being applied as an analytical framework, especially regarding audience component, the main goal of this thesis is to ameliorate the theoretical understanding of the audience component during the securitization process. Specifically, based on Balzacq's division to a formal audience and a moral audience (Balzacq, 2005), and Cote's recognition of the audience as an active factor in securitization (Cote, 2016), this thesis aims to elaborate this division for assisting scholars to identify which audiences the securitizing actor needs to

persuade for conducting a successful securitization act, and more importantly, why some audiences are essential to be persuaded for securitization to occur, while others are not. In addition, in order to create such a new audience conceptualization, this thesis suggests a unique combination between elements from the field of Political Psychology, Perception and Misperception, and Securitization Theory. Thus, acknowledging that the phenomenon of perception and misperception has a prominent role in understanding world politics, as it would be a difficult task to explain international politics without understanding the decision-maker's political perception of the environment (Jervis, 2017, p. xviii), this thesis contends that this element has a prominent role in identifying the audience component during securitization process. In essence, the main argument of this thesis is that the audience's legitimacy to confirm a securitization move, and by thus transform it into a securitization act, stems from two sources: (1) each state's rules within a securitization occurs, which grants an entity the role of the **Legal Audience**; (2) the political perception of the securitizing actor and/or audience, which bestow an entity the role of the **Political Audience**. Assuming that the conceptual framework offered by this thesis is not perfect, this conceptualization will undoubtedly improve the theoretical understanding of the audience component during the securitization process, particularly assisting scholars to identify who the relevant audiences are that needs to be convinced in order to execute a successful securitization act.

In order to verify this new audience conceptualization, this thesis applies it to four case studies that occurred in Israel, a country that deals with many security challenges since its establishment. Each case study represents a different type of securitization act and different kind of threat. Similar to Lupovici (2014), the author of this thesis

also argues that Securitization Theory could be more easily implemented in the case of Israel. Furthermore, as other scholars who have already used Israeli case studies for exploring securitization (Abulof, 2014; Olesker, 2018, 2014a, 2014b; Lupovici, 2016), this thesis indicates two main reasons why focusing on the Israeli policies within the Arab-Israeli Conflict is an adequate case study for this research, which even strengthen the former argument. First, the Arab-Israeli Conflict comprises many kinds of securitization acts, e.g. wars, peace processes and military operations. Second, there is widespread literature and evidence about the Arab-Israeli Conflict, which include memories and scripts of those who were in the top decision-making positions during the process, e.g. leaders, ministers etc., which are necessary in order to explore the subject comprehensively. Thus, in addition to the theoretical contribution to the audience component in Securitization Theory, this thesis may shed light on how the State of Israel deals with existential security threats and which audiences are needed to be convinced in order to implement securitization policy in Israel. Consequently, the original contribution of this thesis is not just a reconceptualization of the audience component in Securitization Theory, but also to the study of Israeli security. Hence, this thesis conducts at the same time both theoretical and empirical contributions to the academic literature.

The division of the chapters of the thesis will be as follows. Chapter 1 presents the literature review of Securitization Theory, focusing on the audience component and its relationship with the Securitizing Actor. Chapter 2 introduces the conceptual framework of the audience component developed by the thesis writer, which defines two types of audiences: Legal Audience, which according to the state's rules, has the legal authority to execute the relevant securitization act; and Political Audience, which

its support (or lack of resistance) for securitization is both not required according to the state rules and is perceived by the securitizing actor and/or audience as an essential condition performing a securitization act. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the thesis. Ontologically, this thesis adheres to a social constructivist approach in which social structures are "real" and "objective", yet their objectivity depends on shared knowledge. From an epistemological standpoint, this thesis adheres to scientific realism, which acknowledges that although social kinds are different from natural kinds, it is still possible to describe casual relations in the world. In addition, Chapter 3 introduces the main characteristics of case study research design that is adopted in this thesis, and also explains how qualitative methods are utilized to obtain the data for this thesis, as it relies on primary sources, secondary sources and interviews. Chapters 4-7 constitute the case studies discussed in the thesis, each is characterized by a different type of security threat that the State of Israel had to deal with. In each of the four cases, the relationship between the military and political echelons in Israel, and between the Israeli government and the American administration will be presented. Chapter 4, *The Six-Day War: The Securitization of the Egyptian Army*, explores how Israel coped with the concentration of Egyptian army forces on Israel's southern border on the eve of the Six Day War in 1967, which was perceived by Israeli decision-makers as an existential threat to the State of Israel. Chapter 5, *The Oslo Accords 1993-1995: The Securitization of the bi-National State*, discusses how Israel chose to sign the Oslo Accords with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in order to create a separation between Israel and the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thus ensuring a solid Jewish majority within Israel. Finally, Chapter 6, *Operation "Defensive Shield": The Securitization of Arafat and*

the Palestinian Authority, discusses how Israel dealt with Palestinian terrorism during the Second Intifada until Operation Defensive Shield. Chapter 7, *Operation "Outside the Box": The Securitization of the Syrian Nuclear Reactor*, discusses how the State of Israel dealt with the construction of a nuclear reactor in Syria, which was perceived by decision-makers in Israel as a first-rate existential threat to the Jewish State and its citizens.

In conclusion, by developing a new conceptualization for the audience component that can assist scholars to identify who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for conducting a successful securitization act, this thesis can contribute to the theoretical understanding of the role of the audience component in securitization theory, strengthen the fruitful combination between the fields of IR and Political Psychology, and enhance the theoretical knowledge in other IR theories concerning conflicts, peace processes, and world politics. In addition, this thesis may contribute to the field of Israeli Studies, especially concerning how the State of Israel copes with existential security threats and the extent to which the US administration influences Israel's decisions on national security matters.

Chapter 1

Literature Review of Securitization Theory

Introduction

This chapter introduces a literature review of Securitization Theory. It begins in discussing the unique contribution of Securitization Theory to the field of IR and Security Studies. Afterwards, this chapter presents Securitization Theory's key elements and approaches, describing the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience that eventually causes securitization. Finally, after introducing several conceptualizations of the audience component, this chapter discusses the disadvantages and shortcomings within these conceptual frameworks, illuminating the reasons why a new conceptualization of the audience must be developed.

Security and Securitization

Wolfers (1962, p. 150) argues that "Security, in any objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked". Traditionally, the term Security was sought through military might. Therefore, the referent object, which is the thing that needs to be secured, was the state (Collins, 2016, p. 2). Similarly, Waever (1995, p. 50) states that "Security is, in historical terms, the field where states threaten each other, challenge

each other's sovereignty, try to impose their will on each other, defend their independence, and so on". However, after the end of the cold war, the term security and the core assumptions about the referent object had begun to occupy scholars' thoughts. As a result, alternative approaches to security, which offer different referent objects, started to evolve (Collins, 2016, p. 2). In that sense, there are other issues that are perceived as existential threats, which are not related to the military realm. For instance, migration (Leonard and Kaunert, 2019; Baker-Beall, 2019), lack of water sources (Stetter et al, 2011), and diseases (Elbe, 2006; Sjostedt, 2011; McInnes & Rushton, 2011; Kamradt-Scott and McInnes, 2012; Hanrieder and Kreuder-Sonnen, 2014). Thus, as Weaver (1995, p. 51) mentioned, in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the term Security, it was vital to "broaden the security agenda to include threats other than the military ones".

Securitization theory was developed in a broader attempt to redefine the concept of security, as it introduces a wider security perception, which comprises not only military security but also political, societal, economic, and environmental security. In adopting constructivist approach to the study of security, securitization theory, which was developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap De-Wilde from the "Copenhagen School" (CS), explores the process in which social entities transform issues into security threats. In short, there are three key main components in securitization theory: (1) **referent object**: thing that is seen to be existentially threatened and has a legitimate claim to survive; (2) **securitizing actor**: actor who securitizes issues by declaring something (a referent object) existentially threatened; and (3) **audience**: the target that needs to be persuaded that the referent object is existentially threatened (Buzan, Waever & De-Wilde, 1998). Although it seems that the move from normal to

emergency mode is immediate, in most cases, securitization is in fact a very gradual process and it is very rarely that an issue moves directly from normalcy to emergency (Abrahamsen, 2005). In that context, Leonard and Kaunert (2019, p. 23) suggest "not to follow too closely the traditional and narrow definition of security as advocated by the Copenhagen School as it may hamper the understanding of 'real life' security dynamics". Alternatively, Leonard and Kaunert (2019, pp. 24-29) accurately assert that securitization occurs even when the security issue is located at the lower level of the normalcy/existential threat spectrum. Thus, securitization does not necessarily incorporate aspects of emergency, exceptionalism or illegality. In that sense, this thesis supports Leonard and Kaunert's view, which adequately reflects how security issues are being perceived and dealt with in reality.

One of the substantial contributions of securitization theory is the way in which the concept of security is perceived. In contrast to the realist concept that perceives threats objectively (there is a "real" threat), securitization theory adopts a constructivist approach to security. Thus, securitization theory perceives threats as a social construction on the basis of speech act (Wæver, 1995) and/or practices (Bigo, 2002; Leonard, 2010). Hence, arguing that threats are not "real" but "perceived", securitization theory focuses on the process of how issues intersubjectively transform into security threats. In other words, an issue becomes a security threat not because it constitutes an objective threat to the referent object, but rather when an audience accepts the securitizing actor's position that the issue constitutes an existential threat to the referent object. In that sense, it is impossible to fully verify whether a threat is "real" or not, as securitization theory focuses on the process of how issues transform

into security threats and how those issues are being perceived. To illustrate this argument, let us consider the following scenario:

Two people, Person A and Person B, armed with pistols, arrive at a remote island inhabited by a native population, who has never seen or heard of guns and rifles. When the two armed people reach the shores of the island, a group of locals arrive and threaten with their bayonets the two uninvited guests. In response, Person A pulls out his gun and threatens to fire at the native group. The islanders, who have never seen or heard of guns, and especially not about their ability to kill people, do not actually understand what the tool is that person A is holding. It is very possible that those locals do not feel threatened by the gun at all. Moreover, it is not inconceivable to assert that some of them would think that Person A greets them and tries to bestow them the gun as a token of friendship. Without a doubt, had Person A shot the gun and killed one of the natives, or if Person B had convinced them that the gun is lethal, they would have changed their perception of the gun and would have recognized it as a security threat. Yet, until that happens, the islanders do not realize that the pistol poses a security menace to them. This situation clearly demonstrates one of the key factors of security threats. On the one hand, from an objective point of view, there is no doubt that the gun poses a security threat to the lives of the islanders. On the other hand, however, it is also a fact that from a subjective perspective, the pistol is not perceived by islanders as a security menace. Thus, a paradox is actually created here, in which the gun is simultaneously both a security threat and non-security menace. To overcome this situation, we need to decide what the purpose of our examination is. Thus, while we pursue to understand how people and states confront security threats, we must first focus on how they perceive them as such. In other words, it is their

subjective and more precisely their inter-subjective character that counts for our understanding, not the objective one. In fact, this is the essence of Securitization Theory, which examines how social entities decide what an existential threat is and how to deal with it.

Despite the originality of the theory, there are scholars who criticize the CS' ignorance of the objectivity of security threats. Booth (2007, p. 165) argues that the CS' conception misses chunks of reality, as it is "based on the fallacy that threats do not exist outside discourse". For instance, Booth asserts that "the danger posed by global warming to low-lying island states was a physical process long before the discourse of environmental security was invented by its proponents and listened to by their audiences" (Booth, 2007, p. 165). This thesis holds the opinion that Booth is partly right. On the one hand, it is true that the CS' framework ignores the objectivity of threats. According to the CS, an issue becomes a security threat not because it constitutes an objective threat to the referent object, but rather when an audience accepts the securitizing actor's position that the issue poses an existential threat to the referent object. On the other, the main aim of securitization theory is not to suggest whether a threat is "real" or not, but to explore how an issue becomes a security threat in the eyes of social entities. Therefore, the theory must focus on the threat's subjectivity and not on its objectivity. In other words, for exploring securitization, it does not matter whether a threat is "real" or not, rather whether social entities perceive this threat as "real". In that context, it is important to clarify that "threat" is a relative term, as it is perceived differently in diverse places (Buzan, Waever & De-Wilde, 1998, p. 30). For example, whereas in Europe economically motivated migrants are often considered to be the main source of insecurity, in Israel

they are seen as the solution to security challenges. For example, in 1994, in order to prevent Palestinian terrorist attacks, the Israeli government approved issuing working visas to migrants in order to replace the Palestinian workers (Lupovici, 2014, p. 403). Thus, while in Europe the issue was perceived as a security threat, it was not portrayed as such in Israel. Hence, this thesis supports the argument that for exploring securitization, it does not matter whether threats are "real" or not but whether they are perceived as "real".

The Philosophical and Sociological approaches of Securitization

There are two approaches to characterize how normal issues transform into security threats within securitization theory: the "philosophical approach" in which securitization occurs through "speech act", and the "sociological approach" accordingly securitization develops through "practices".

The CS' approach to security is that security can be regarded as a "speech act". Based on John Austin (1962), who claims that in some instances language does not simply describe things or states of affairs but also does something through its very utterance, the CS' scholars argue that there is a "social magic power" of language, as the word "security" is the act and by saying it something is done (Waeber, 1995, p. 55). During securitization process, someone (securitizing actor) points to a development or potentiality claiming that something or somebody (referent object) with an inherent right to survive is existentially threatened, and therefore extraordinary measures (most likely to be wielded by the securitizing actor himself) are justified. By this move,

an issue is lifted above normal politics and attains urgency and precedence (Waeber, 2004, p. 56). Yet in order for an issue to be successfully securitized, an audience accepts it as such. Without this acceptance, which can be manifested through controlled silence (Vuori, 2011), it is only a securitizing move, not a securitization (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 25). Therefore, securitization is both a "performative speech act", as in speaking security it is done (as by uttering the words 'I do' at a wedding, a marriage comes into existence), as well as an "intersubjective act process" between the securitizing actor and an audience (Floyd & Croft, 2011).

However, the CS' approach has been criticized by scholars, in particular from the so-called "Paris School" (PS), who argue that focusing solely on speech acts is too narrow to understand security practices and hence the CS' approach is a limited one (Stritzel, 2007). For instance, Hansen (2000) asserts that the conception of security as a speech act is problematic in cases when the potential subject of security has a limited possibility or no possibility at all, to speak about its security problem. Therefore, Hansen contends that it is impossible to securitize an issue. In order to illustrate its argument, Hansen (2000) provides the case of Pakistani women who were raped, and would prefer to keep silence for their own safety, since those who had complained were victims to honor killing. Booth's (2007) criticism is even more poignant, as he asserts that securitization theory suffers from being elitist, as what matters above all is top leaders, states, threatened elites and audiences with agenda-making power. Hence, those without discourse-making power are disenfranchised, unable to join the securitization game. As a result of the CS' top-down perspective, what is supposed to be a radical move actually works in the interests of power, because with power goes discourse making potential, and thus those outside the discourse are not only silent,

but silenced. Alternatively, arguing that many security problems actually develop with little or no discursive design, the PS' scholars suggest a different conception for securitization in which security is perceived as a pragmatic act. Thus, according to Bigo (2002), security is not necessarily a rhetorical performance (speech act) that enables emergency measures, but it can also be constructed through routinized forms of practices. Therefore, securitization works through everyday technologies, through effects of power that are continuous rather than exceptional, through political struggles, and through institutional competition within the professional security field in which the most trivial interests are at stake. For example, Bigo (2002) suggests that the securitization of migration was not a result of a solely political leaders' speech act, but it was emerged also from administrative practices, such as population profiling, risk assessment and proactive preparation, which were conducted by "security professionals", who hold the advantage of exercising authority. In enhancing Bigo's argument that securitization can be constructed through practices, Leonard (2010, p. 238) identifies two main types of securitizing practices, which are activities that (1) have traditionally been implemented to tackle issues that are largely perceived to be security issues, and/or (2) extraordinary activities, which are activities that have never or rarely applied previously. For example, Leonard argues that all the main activities of FRONTEX can be considered to be securitizing practices and have therefore significantly contributed to the ongoing securitization of asylum and migration in the EU.

Scholars also contend that securitization theory must consider other aspects besides speech acts. According to McDonald (2008), the reliance on language as the exclusive form of securitizing move is problematic as it downplays the importance of contextual

factors, such as dominant narratives and identity, which condition both patterns of securitization and the broader construction of security. Therefore, McDonald asserts that the social, political and historical contexts are needed to be considered in order to understand the construction of security. In order to incorporate other elements beside speech act, Balzacq (2011b) suggests different securitization analysis, which is based on three levels: "Agents", "Acts", and "Context". The level of "Agents" concentrates on the actors and the relations that structure the situation under scrutiny. In essence, this level includes all the actors (securitizing actor, audience, and functional actor), its power positions and personal/social identities, and the referent object and subject. The level of "Acts" is interested in practices, which underwrite the process of securitization. This level comprises the "action type" (the appropriate language to use in order to perform a given act), the "heuristic artefacts" that the securitizing actor uses to create the circumstances that will facilitate the mobilization of the audience, the "dispositif", and the policies which is generated by securitization. Finally, the level of "Context" includes two types of contexts, the proximate and the distal, as threats arise out of and through the work of specific contexts. Therefore, in order to capture the meaning of any discourse, it is necessary to situate it both socially and historically. Thus, Balzacq (2011a) asserts that securitization should be understood as a pragmatic act which based on three core assumptions: (1) the centrality of audience, as for an issue to be pronounced an instance of securitization, an empowering audience must agree with the claims made by the securitizing actor; (2) the co-dependency of agency and context, as and the semantic repertoire of security is a combination of textual and cultural meaning. Therefore, the performative dimension of security rests between semantic regularity and contextual

circumstances; and (3) the "dispositif" (constellation of practices and tools) and the structuring force of practices. While securitization occurs in a field of struggles, it consists of practices which instantiate intersubjective understanding and which are framed by tools and the habitus inherited from different social fields. In essence, Balzacq (2011a, p. 3) defines securitization as *"an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artifacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions) about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be immediately undertaken to block it"*.

In a response to Balzacq's claim, Waever (2014) asserts that this kind of "sociology of securitization" dissipates into unending chains of cause-effect, where everything has to be taken into account at each stage in order to understand how each unique actor interprets and reacts to each input. This thesis tends to agree with the Waever's argument. This can be a never ending story that will inevitably make it impossible to explore securitization. Hence, this thesis argues that in order to simply explore securitization, it is better to stick with the CS' framework, yet to enhance it in some aspects, especially regarding the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience, an aspect that will be discussed in this thesis within the next section.

The Relationship between the Securitizing Actor and the Audience

As mentioned above, the securitizing actor and the audience are two main components within securitization theory. The **Securitizing Actor** is the figure who securitizes issues by declaring that the referent object is existentially threatened by something. While the common players in this role are political leaders and governments (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 40), other actors, such as the media (McDonald, 2008), NGOs and environmental groups (Trombetta, 2011), can also raise an issue as a security threat. The **Audience** component is the figure that needs to be persuaded that the referent object is existentially threatened. According to the CS, an issue is successfully securitized when an audience both (1) agrees with the securitizing actor's claim that the issue is an existential threat to the referent object, and (2) supports the securitizing actor's suggestion to use extraordinary measures to deal against the threat (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 25). Whereas it is most prevalent that the general public or the parliament perform the audience role, there are cases that other figures such as the media perform that role (Salter & Mutlu, 2013). In addition, as sometimes the securitization process is not publicly available but covert, there is always an audience that needs to be convinced by the securitizing actor for executing a securitization act (Salter & Mutlu, 2013). While the audience component can be a combination of several audiences (Leonard & Kaunert, 2011; Salter, 2008), Balzacq (2005) argues that the securitizing actor is sensitive to two kinds of support, formal and moral. For example, in the case of launching a war, the moral audience's support from the public is important. Yet, the government needs the formal support of the relevant institution that legally mandates the government to execute a military action (Balzacq, 2005, pp.

184-185). The case of Britain's decision to join the USA in the war against Iraq in 2003 also demonstrates the same conclusion in which it is the formal decision by the parliament, or any other institutional body that mandates the government to adopt a specific policy, that is necessary and sufficient (Roe, 2008). Nevertheless, the audience is not just a factor that only authorizes/rejects the securitizing actor securitization move. In fact, the audience is an active agent, capable of having a meaningful effect on the intersubjective construction of security values. Thus, the audience has also the ability to exert influence over securitization processes and the policies selected to address perceived threats (Cote, 2016).

Some scholars reject the importance of the audience component during the securitization process. Based on the Balzacq's (2005) argument, that securitization cannot simultaneously operate as an illocutionary speech act and be dependent on the speech act's acceptance by the relevant audience, Floyd (2011; 2016) denounces the role of the audience. According to Floyd, "the audience is not an analytical concept, but rather a normative concept in analytical disguise, which is to say that it does not stem from actual empirical observation of how politics operates but rather from Ole Wæver's view of how politics, including security policy, should be done" (Floyd, 2011, pp. 428-429).

Although Floyd asserts that the audience component should be overlooked from securitization analysis, this thesis supports Cote's (2016, p. 543) statement, in which Floyd's opinion represents a selective reading of the CS. Thus, this thesis agrees with those who contend that the audience is in fact an important factor in securitization theory, as its acceptance is essential factor for executing a securitization act (Buzan at

el, 1998; Balzacq, 2005; Roe, 2008; Leonard & Kaunert, 2011; Cote, 2016). However, how can one identify who performs the audience's role during the securitization process, and why some audiences are essential to be persuaded for securitization to occur while others are not? Some scholars have tried to decipher this conundrum by suggesting different conceptualization for the audience element.

On the one hand, Leonard & Kaunert (2011, pp. 65-68) suggest categorizing the audience into three different streams, "problem", "policy", and "politics", each characterized by specific participants. In the "problem" stream, the audience role is performed by other decision-makers involved in the policy-making process. In the "policy" stream, the audience role is performed by specialists and technocrats, which tends to be convinced by arguments based upon knowledge, rationality and efficiency. In the "politics" stream, the audience role is performed by the decision-making process, and the general public. Thus, this stream comprises elements such as public mood, pressure groups campaigns, and election results, which may have an important impact on whether policy proposals are adopted. In order to illustrate their audience model, Leonard & Kaunert (2011, p. 74) uses the case of the British proposal to establish transit processing centers for asylum-seekers outside the EU in 2003. According to Leonard & Kaunert, this securitization failed because British government did not manage to persuade the audience in all the three respective streams ("problem"- other members of government and political elites; "policy"- specialist and technocrats working on the issue of asylum in the British government circles; "politics"- other governments from the EU and significant segments of the EU public opinion).

On the other hand, Salter (2008) suggests a different model that is distinct between four types of audiences, which he describes as settings. The four settings are "elite", "technocratic", "scientific", and "popular", each operating on different logics of persuasion. According to Salter: "Using dramaturgical analysis, we suggest that securitizing moves take place within different sociological settings that operate with unique rules, norms, and practices" (Salter, 2008, p. 321). Hence, Salter argues, "Rather than classify securitizing moves as comedies, tragedies, and histories, we can classify them according to the setting... Each of these settings structures the speaker–audience relationship of knowledge and authority, the weight of social context, and the success of the securitizing move. The setting of a securitizing act includes the stage on which it is made, the genre in which it is made, the audience to which it is pitched, and the reception of the audience" (Salter, 2008, p. 328). In order to illustrate his model, Salter asserts that the securitization of "Total Information Awareness" (TIA) in 2003 failed because it was not supported by all the relevant audiences. Thus, although it was supported by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld (elite), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (technocratic), and the review committee (scientific), it was rejected by the US Senate (popular), and therefore the securitization move failed (Salter, 2011).

Disadvantages and Shortcomings in the Audience's Conceptualization

Given that all former conceptualizations (Balzacq, 2005; Salter, 2008, Leonard & Kaunert, 2011; Cote, 2016) have enhanced the theoretical understanding regarding the audience dimension in particular and concerning securitization theory in general,

this thesis contends that the audience component deserves further development. In essence, all models introduce a very vague description of the audience component, without offering any mechanism to identify why a specific actor performs the role of the audience during the securitization process while others are not. In addition, these two models do not explain why each specific audience's support is essential for securitization to occur, while others acceptance is not vital for securitization.

Although Balzacq (2005) was the first to suggest the separation between formal and moral audiences, he did not provide a mechanism that identifies who the relevant audiences are. Furthermore, Balzacq (2011, p. 35) argues that it may be difficult to identify precisely the relevant audience as long as different political regimes tolerate and value different kinds of audiences. Hence, this thesis's main task is to develop a comprehensive audience conceptualization that identifies who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for conducting securitization. Finally, although he mentions the essential aspect of the formal support over the moral one for successful securitization, Balzacq does not adequately address the legitimacy factor, which is what the audience in fact provides to the securitizing actor when the former support the security policy of the latter. In that context, Balzacq did not mention what is the source of this legitimization and whether it stems from the laws of the state or maybe a legitimacy for securitization is the consequence of another source. Cote's (2016, pp. 551-552) audience's conceptualization indeed characterizes the audience as an active participant in securitization processes. However, despite its tremendous contribution to the theoretical understanding of the audience, this conceptual framework also lacks the ability to indicate who the relevant audiences are that need to be convinced in order to successfully execute a securitization act.

Another prominent disadvantage stems from both Salter's (2008) and Leonard & Kaunert's (2011) models, in which there is a theoretical possibility of multiple audiences that the securitizing actor needs to convince during the securitization process. In suggesting that there are several kinds of audiences, Salter (2008) asserts that each one of them operates on different logics of persuasion, and the threshold for securitization varies according to the setting. In essence, Salter's conceptual framework of the audience component introduces different practical ways of how to "speak" with each "audience". In that sense, Salter also argues that: "...there are four key settings for these securitizing moves. This is not to say that, in other contexts, more settings are not possible, but rather that the four settings are the fewest number of categories that allow for significant differentiation within this case" (Salter, 2008, p. 330). Hence, according to Salter, there can be a large number of audiences. A similar argument also occurs in Leonard & Kaunert's (2011) conceptualization, which also suggests several kinds of audiences (problem, policy, and politics), each characterized by specific participants. In this context, this thesis holds the opinion that the situation of multiple audiences can be a bottomless pit as, theoretically, according to Salter, there can be a very large number of audiences. However, in reality, the securitizing actor cannot deal with numerous audiences and therefore he/she must focus on those who are necessary to be convinced for conducting securitization. Moreover, both models suggested by Salter (2008) and Leonard & Kaunert (2011) do not explain why each specific audience's support is essential for securitization to occur, while others acceptance is not vital for securitization. Finally, these two models do not explain why each specific audience's support is essential for securitization to occur, while others acceptance is not vital for securitization.

Conclusions

This chapter introduces a literature review of securitization theory, focusing on the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience. Although all the audience's conceptualizations above have made an important contribution to the theoretical understanding of the audience component in securitization theory, they all lack the ability to specifically identify who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for conducting securitization. In addition, all of them do not provide an explanation regarding why those audiences are pertinent for the securitization process while others are not. In order to remedy that shortcoming, this thesis argues that a comprehensive audience conceptualization must propose a mechanism that identifies who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for conducting securitization and why those audiences are pertinent for the securitization process. In other words, it needs to stress why some audiences are essential to be persuaded for securitization to occur, while others are not. This endeavor will be the main task of the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework of the Audience

Introduction

In the previous chapter, following the exhibition of securitization theory's state of the art focusing on the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience, the disadvantages and shortcomings of former conceptualizations of the audience component were introduced. Although all former audience's conceptualizations have made an important contribution to the theoretical understanding of the audience component in securitization theory, this thesis argues that a new audience conceptualization must be developed. This will be the main endeavor of this chapter. Thus, this new conceptualization will propose a mechanism that assists scholars to identify who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for conducting securitization. In addition, the new audience conceptual framework will explain why those audiences are pertinent for the securitization process.

Two Basic Assumption for a New Audience Conceptualization

After a critical analysis of notable conceptual frameworks of the audience that were developed (Buzan, Waever & De-Wilde, 1998; Balzacq, 2005, 2011a; Salter, 2008; Leonard & Kaunert, 2011; Cote, 2016), this thesis argues that all of them lack the ability to recognize who the pertinent audiences are that need to be convinced for

executing a successful securitization act. In addition, all of them do not provide an explanation regarding why those audiences are pertinent for the securitization process while others are not. In order to develop such a comprehensive conceptualization for the audience component, two important aspects must be taken into consideration.

First, what kind of legitimacy those audiences, the formal and the moral as suggested by Balzacq (2005), actually grant with their support to the securitizing actor, and what the sources of the legitimacy are. For example, does the legitimization for securitization derive solely from the consent of the official institutions of the state, which received their status in accordance with the laws of the state? Rather, does the legitimacy emanate from other sources, regardless of the laws of the state? In this context, it seems that Balzacq meant that the legitimacy of the formal audience emanates from the state laws, arguing that "states can do without the UN Security Council, but need the support of their legislative branch to launch a military action" (Balzacq, 2005, p. 185). However, it is unclear what the source of legitimacy of the moral audience is and what are the criteria by which the moral audience is selected? Unfortunately, the theoretical literature of securitization theory has no answer to this conundrum.

Second, an audience's conceptualization framework needs to take into consideration that each country and society has different culture, norms and rules. Thus, while it is the parliament who gives the formal support for securitization act in western states, e.g., Britain's decision to join the USA in the war against Iraq (Roe, 2008), there are states where the religious elite has also the authority/legitimacy to decide on security

matters. For instance, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Saudi Arabia's leader, King Fahd, realized that the Iraqi army existentially threatened his kingdom and he therefore needed the protection of the US' army. However, in order to decide on the entry of foreign troops into his kingdom, he had to consult with the Saudi religious establishment and obtain an Islamic fatwa, which authorized the entrance of half a million American soldiers into Saudi Arabia (Gold, 2003, pp. 157-158). In that sense, a comprehensive conceptual framework of the audience component must have the ability to analyze different types of regimes. Moreover, it needs to recognize the fact that each country has different kinds of institutions that decide on the country's security agenda. Thus, the new conceptualization will move the audience component beyond the democratic or Westphalian straitjacket, which previous theories of securitization have been blamed for wearing (Wilkinson, 2007).

After considering these two aspects, the next step will be developing our audience conceptualization. This task will be executed by elaborating the arguments of Balzacq (2005), who asserts that there are two kinds of support, a formal and a moral, with Cote's (2016), who claims that the audience is in fact an active factor within the securitization process. In an effort to expand Balzacq's model, this thesis argues that the legitimacy of each type of audience originates from two sources: (1) state's rules and (2) political perception.

The Audiences and their Sources for Legitimacy

As the CS' seminal framework suggested, in order to successfully conduct a securitization act, the securitizing actor needs to obtain the support of the audience. Thus, this audience provides the securitizing actor a legitimacy to execute his securitization policy (Buzan, Waever and De-Wilde, 1998). In that sense, a support for securitization means that the audience agrees (or does not oppose) with the securitizing actor's claim that an issue is an existential threat to the referent object. In addition, the audience also consents (or does not reject) the extraordinary measures for eliminating the threat suggested by the securitizing actor. In terms of Roe's two stages of securitization process, the audience gives its support to both the "stage of identification" and the "stage of mobilization" (Roe, 2008). Practically, as Olesker (2018) argues, this legitimacy to securitize is in fact a source of political power that provides the ability to act politically, and without it, securitization cannot take effect. In that sense, this thesis suggests that the legitimacy for securitization stems from two sources, each impacts on two different audiences during securitization process: (1) the state rules that impact on the identity of the **Legal Audience**; and (2) the political perception of the securitizing actor and/or the audience that impacts on the identity of the **Political Audience**. Although Balzacq (2005) uses other pronouns for the two audience's types, "formal" and "moral", this new conceptual framework of the audience uses other terms, legal and political, which better reflect the source of the legitimacy of each audience.

Legal Audience

The legal audience's legitimacy for securitization stems from the rules of each state, which practically guide the securitizing actor from which entity he needs to obtain the support for his securitization policy. In general, each state has its own laws which clearly define which body has the authority to order any kind of act. Thus, based on the laws of the state, the securitizing actor knows from whom he should receive support in order to execute his securitization act. It is important to note that international law has also a prominent role regarding this type of audience. Therefore, one must take into account whether the relevant state holds a monist position, in which the domestic and international legal systems form a unity, or a dualist position, accordingly only the national law exists as a law.

The example of the Oslo Accords accurately illustrates the role of the Legal audience. In terms of securitization theory, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (securitizing actor), who perceived the bi-national state option as an existential threat to the State of Israel (referent object), argued that in order to eliminate this threats, Israel must separate from the Palestinians. Therefore, the Oslo Accords (extraordinary measures) were Rabin's platform for creating the Palestinian people an autonomy in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which would practically create a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians. Yet, in order to successfully securitize the bi-national state outcome, Rabin needed to obtain the support of the Israeli parliament (Knesset), which had the legal authority to approve an Israeli withdrawal from territories. Without the Knesset's support, the Oslo Accords would not have any legal validity and the State of Israel cannot actually execute and

implement any agreement. Hence, in terms of securitization theory, the Knesset performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, since its legitimacy derives from the laws of the State of Israel. While the term **Legal Audience** may be construed as persons engaging in legal matters, such as legal counsel, the interpretation and intention of this thesis regarding the term **Legal Audience** is to those individuals/bodies that their acceptance is legally necessary to execute a securitization act.

Hence, this thesis defines the **Legal Audience** as *an entity, which according to the state's rules, has the legal authority to execute the relevant securitization act. Without this audience's support, the securitizing actor does not have the legal ability and legitimacy to conduct that relevant securitization act.*

Political Audience

While these are the state's laws that legitimate certain bodies to approve the securitization act, there are times when the securitizing actor obtains support from other entities as well. Thus, it is unclear what the source of legitimacy of those other entities is, as their approval is also necessary for conducting securitization. At first thought, it seems that it is very important to gain support from the general public, especially in a democratic regime though not necessarily, in order to execute a securitization act. However, particularly on security issues, there are many instances where the securitizing actor does not seek to obtain public approval before launching security policies. It is mainly because most of the security decisions are covert and unknown to the general public in real time due to fear of operational risk. Hence, the

conundrum is what legitimates other types of audiences, which their approval is not essential for implementing security policies according to state's laws. In order to decipher this riddle, this thesis uses elements from political psychology. According to McDermott (2004, p .1), "accurate representation of the world around us demonstrates the link between politics and psychology in deep and myriad ways". Thus, McDermott (2004, p. 2) suggests that the combination between politics and psychology can provide additional purchase in topics that include political leadership, judgement and decision-making. In that sense, this thesis acknowledges that the phenomenon of perception and misperception has a prominent role in understanding world politics, as it would be a difficult task to explain international politics without understanding the decision-maker's political perception of the environment (Jervis, 2017, p. xviii). As a result, this thesis argues that this element has also a prominent role in identifying other kinds of audience during the securitization process.

According to the literature of psychology, "perception" is the process of apprehending by means of the senses and recognizing and interpreting what is processed. Psychologists think of perception as a single unified awareness derived from sensory processes while stimulus is present, and hence it is the basis for understanding, learning, and knowing and the motivation for action (Stein, 2013, p. 365). In that sense, decisions are often shaped in fundamental ways by both the perception people have of the situation they face and the understanding people have regarding what sort of actions produce what sorts of outcomes (Herrmann, 2013, p. 356). Moreover, given people differ in their perceptions of the world in general and of other actors in particular, they behave differently in the same situation (Jervis, 2017, p. 29). Thus, as

individual leaders have a causal impact on outcomes, the counterfactual implication is that if a different individual with different characteristics had occupied a key leadership position, the outcome might very well have been different (Levi, 2013, pp. 302-303). In that sense, because of differences in personality, previous experiences, or ideology, people differ in their beliefs and therefore they perceive things differently, e.g., the perception of whether an issue is a threat or not. The same goes with one's political understanding as every actor within the political spectrum holds its own political view and perception (Jervis, 2017, p. 107). Cohen (2018, p. 205), who argues that "who is in charge makes a difference", clearly concludes this argument in which individual leaders' identity do matter. In that sense, Cohen indicates that some leaders "swung their respective countries in very different directions than other leaders might have done".

Hence, this thesis asserts that given each securitizing actor has its own personality, previous experiences, or ideology, and thus each has its own political perception, the securitizing actor perceives the support of a different entity besides the legal audience as essential legitimacy for securitization. Therefore, although the securitizing actor is technically able to execute his securitization policy only with the legal audience's support, he often strives to obtain support and legitimacy from an entity that he perceives as necessary for securitization. The policy of the American administration prior to the First Gulf War accurately illustrates this argument. In order to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait with military means in 1991, the American President George W.H. Bush wished to obtain the support of the UN, and especially the support of the Soviet Union, perceiving them both as necessary. Bush believed that an international support would provide legitimacy to the planned attack against Saddam Hussein's

regime (Ross, 2007, p. 87). In that sense, although the American president could have attacked Iraq without any support from the international community, he perceived its support as essential for conducting a military operation. Therefore, Bush needed to convince this audience to successfully execute a securitization act. Nevertheless, in the same situation, a different securitizing actor (another American president) could have thought differently to President Bush. In that scenario, another securitizing actor would have waged an extraordinary measure (military operation in Iraq) without the support of the international community.

Another example is the Israeli bombardment of the Syrian nuclear reactor in 2007. In practice, the State of Israel could have demolished the Al-Kibar nuclear reactor in Syria in 2007 without the acceptance of the American government, as it was done in 1981, when the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin ordered to destroy the Iraqi nuclear reactor without informing the Reagan administration in advance (Nakdimon, 2007). However, it seems that the lack of resistance of the American President George W .Bush had an impact on the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's decision to attack the Syrian reactor in 2007 (Katz, 2019; Olmert, 2018; Abrams, 2013). In both cases, those nuclear reactors were perceived as an existential threat to the State of Israel and therefore the Israeli leadership decided to demolish them both. However, while the former securitizing actor (Begin) did not perceive the American government as a political audience, the latter (Olmert) significantly considered Washington's support (or its lack of resistance) as essential for executing an identical securitization act.

Nevertheless, it is not just the securitizing actor who decides what the pertinent audience is that needs to be persuaded for securitization to be successful. In fact, the

audience component has the same ability. As it was noted above, the audience is an active factor who participates in the process and influence on the construction of security (Cote, 2016). Furthermore, similar to the securitizing actor, the audience has its own political perception. Hence, this thesis contends that the audience has also the ability to decide from which entity a legitimacy for securitization is required. Moreover, since the audience is the figure who accepts/rejects securitization, it is able to stipulate his support for the securitization act with the support of another entity. The Israeli government's decision-making process prior to the Six Day War accurately illustrates this argument. In mid May 1967, the Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, had ordered both to concentrate its arm forces along the Israeli border and to impose a siege on the Straits of Tiran, claiming in public that his goal was the destruction of Israel. As a result, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) perceived that the Egyptian Army constituted an existential threat to the State of Israel (referent object). In order to eradicate this security threat, the IDF suggested the Israeli government, which was the legal object to authorize the IDF to execute a war, to execute a preemptive war against Egypt (extraordinary measures). The Israeli government agreed with the IDF's argument that the concentration of Egyptian forces was indeed an existential threat to the State of Israel. However, the government stated that without the American administration's support it would not be possible to launch a war against Egypt. In other words, the Israeli perspective was that any significant military actions must be coordinated in advance with the administration in Washington. Thus, for the first time in its history, the Israeli leadership decided that it should coordinate its positions with the United States, even if the decision was related to Israel's security and existence (Gluska, 2016; Golan, 2017; Oren, 2002; Rabin, 1979;

Bregman; 2016). In the theoretical context of the audience dimension, in order to securitize the Egyptian army, the support of the Israeli government was essential by the Israeli law. Hence, the Israeli government performed the role of the **Legal Audience**. Yet, the Israeli government stipulated its support for securitization in demanding that before executing any preemptive war against Egypt, Israel must receive the American administration's approval. Therefore, since the legal audience (Israeli government) perceived an American endorsement to be necessary for securitization, the American administration performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

Thus, based on these arguments above, this thesis defines the **Political Audience** as *an entity that its support (or lack of resistance) for securitization is both not required according to the state rules and is perceived by the securitizing actor and/or audience as an essential condition for successfully performing a securitization act. Without the political audience's support (or its lack of resistance), the securitizing actor and/or audience thinks that there is not sufficient legitimacy to conduct securitization.*

Illustration of the New Audience Conceptualization: Austria-Hungary Securitization of Serbia prior the First World War

Even though this case study is not contemporary, the following empirical illustration of the Austro-Hungarian securitization of Serbia, which led to the outbreak of the First World War, adequately demonstrates the new conceptualization of the audience.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, with its fifty millions citizens from eleven different nationalities, ruled on the current areas of Austria, Hungary, Czechia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North-East Italy and part of Poland (Hasting, 2013, p. 52). For the Dual Monarchy, which aspired to defend its position as a great power in Europe, Serbia was perceived as an existential threat. The Austrian-Hungarian leadership feared that a strong Slavic State in the Balkan area would cultivate national aspirations of its Slavic citizens that would eventually lead to the Dual Monarchy's disintegration. Hence, the Empire's leadership assumed that the destruction of Serbia and its annexation would be an appropriate move to eliminate this threat (MacMillan, 2013, p. 443; McMeekin, 2013, pp. 24-25). However, Serbia's big brother, the Russian Empire, posed a great challenge for Austria-Hungary, as its both huge territory and unlimited manpower made the Russian army an opponent that the Austria-Hungarian military would not be able to defeat. For that reason, the dual alliance between Austria-Hungary and Germany made sure that the former could rely on the latter's assistance in case of a Russian attack (Kronenbitter, 2009, p. 36; McMeekin, 2013, p. 40).

Austria-Hungary also had its own domestic political affairs. Starting from 1867, the Compromise (*Ausgleich*) was the constitutional basis for the Dual Monarchy's political structure, and Austria-Hungary was in fact composed of two separate states. Each had its own parliament and government, responsible for most aspects of domestic policies and a great deal of economic affairs. Thus, Austria-Hungary's diplomacy was steered by a foreign minister, who presided over the "Common Ministerial Council", the highest-ranking body of decision-makers in Austria-Hungary. However, both parliaments had no authority concerning foreign affairs policy, which were together with the command of the armed forces the sole prerogative of the Emperor (Kaiser),

who was advised by the common ministers and the prime ministers. Moreover, Austro-Hungarian foreign policy was determined by the Emperor, who had the authority to appoint the prime ministers and veto legislation, and, in particular, to decide whether to declare a war (Kronenbitter, 2009, p. 29; Clark, 2013, pp. 65-66, 99-100). Hence, in terms of securitization theory, since Kaiser Franz Joseph had the legal authority to approve any military act according to the Empires' constitution, he performed the role of the **Legal Audience**.

In practice, the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince, Franz Ferdinand, on June 28, 1914, was a pretext for successfully securitizing the Serbian issue and for conducting a war against Serbia (Hastings, 2013, p. 27). Within a few days of the murder, a consensus formed among the key Austrian decision-makers, headed by Foreign Minister Berchtold and the Army Chief of Staff Conrad, that only a military action would solve the problem of the monarchy's relations with Serbia (Kershaw, 2015, p. 48; MacMillan, 2013, p. 505; McMeekin, 2013, pp. 30-31; Clark, 2013, pp. 391-392). In Conrad's point of view, without a victorious campaign against Serbia, the Habsburg Empire would fall prey to its greedy neighbors and quarreling nationalities. Therefore, the defeat of Serbia's army was the only path to providing for the Monarchy's security in the Balkans (Kronenbitter, 2009: 45). Berchtold went to meet Kaiser Joseph and asked his support for war against Serbia. During their meeting, the foreign minister told his sovereign that if Austria let this act of terrorist aggression go unpunished, its southern and eastern neighbors would be so certain of the empire's weakness. Furthermore, Berchtold reassured the emperor that he would act only after he had reliable information confirming Serbian involvement in the crime. Kaiser Joseph agreed in favor of waiting, but his own primacy was not the investigation, but

rather the need for imperial unity. Therefore, he insisted that the support of the Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza is essential to any policy concerning Serbia (McMeekin, 2013, p. 35; Clark, 2013, pp. 399-400). Thus, in terms of securitization theory, although the Empire could have launched a military act against Serbia without Tisza's support, Emperor Joseph, the legal audience, perceived his support as essential for the securitization act. Hence, the Hungarian prime minister performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

In addition to Hungarian prime minister's support, Kaiser Joseph had wanted to ensure Germany's military support in case that Russia would intervene to defend Serbia. Hence, during his meeting with Conrad, the Emperor conditioned his support for launching a war against Serbia only if the Germans would support Austria-Hungary (MacMillan, 2013, p. 507; McMeekin, 2013, p. 106). In fact, the German support was perceived as essential also by both Berchtold and Conrad (securitizing actors) and Tisza (political audience) (McMeekin, 2013, p. 41; Clark, 2013, pp. 401-402). The German support, known as the "Blank Cheque", was delivered on July 6, as the German Prime Minister Bethmann, backed up by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, officially granted Germany's commitment to Austria-Hungary (McMeekin, 2013, pp. 104-105). Thus, in terms of securitization theory, although Austria-Hungary could have executed a war against Serbia without the acceptance of Germany, the latter was perceived as essential for executing any securitization act by both the securitizing actors and the audiences. Therefore, the German leadership performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

A day after the Germans had bestowed their Blank Cheque to Austria-Hungary, the Common Ministerial Council assembled. During the meeting, Berchtold repeated his argument that Serbia constitutes an existential threat to the dual monarchy. The foreign minister indicated that despite the risk, showing weakness in the current crisis would be fatal, and only a timely settlement account with Serbia could halt the disintegration of the dual monarchy (McMeekin, 2013, p. 109). While most of the senior political-military elite supported the war against Serbia, there was not a consensus for a military strike among the Common Ministerial Council, as the Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza opposed the war. Tisza feared that Russia might enter the war to protect Serbia and hence he wanted to be certain of the German support for Austria-Hungary (MacMillan, 2013, p. 506; McMeekin, 2013, p. 41). However, after he had heard about both the German support and the inquiry results, proving that there was a Serbian involvement in the assassination, the Hungarian prime minister was willing to support executing military action against Serbia. Nevertheless, Tisza stipulated his support on a preceding careful diplomatic strategy before the war, in which the monarchy would present an ultimatum to Belgrade before launching an attack (McMeekin, 2013, p. 110). Thus, after Berchtold had fulfilled all of Tisza's preconditions, the latter was finally convinced to support the attack against Serbia and the foreign minister no longer faced any serious opposition to a policy of provoking a war with Serbia (McMeekin, 2013, p. 122; MacMillan, 2013, pp. 514-515). Eventually, Austria-Hungarian sent its 48 hours' ultimatum to Serbia on July 23, one that the Serbian leadership could not accept. Thus, after the Serbian government had rejected the ultimatum, Kaiser Franz Joseph gave its formal approval for war, and thus Austria-Hungary declared a war against Serbia on July 28 (MacMillan, 2013, pp. 519-520). On

the next day, the bombardment on Belgrade started and the war began (MacMillan, 2013, p. 542).

In conclusion, the new conceptualization of the audience component clearly illustrates which actors performed the role of the audiences and why. Thus, in order to conduct a successful securitization act and execute a military action against Serbia, the securitizing actors (Foreign Minister Berchtold and the Army Chief of Staff Conrad) needed to persuade three different audiences: Kaiser Franz Joseph (legal audience); Hungarian PM Tisza (political audience); and the German leadership (political audience).

Conclusions

With the aim to enhance the theoretical understanding regarding the audience during the securitization process, this chapter introduced a new conceptual framework for the audience component. In practice, this new conceptualization framework has three main advantages.

First, it has the ability to assist scholars in identifying who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for executing a securitization act. This thesis assumes that the conceptual framework offered by the thesis is not perfect, as surely it will not be able to tailor itself to any case study of securitization. Yet, this thesis holds a position that this new audience conceptualization will undoubtedly ameliorate the theoretical understanding of the audience component during the securitization process.

Second, this new conceptual framework compels us to explore both the legal aspect of the audience, which is mainly related to the relevant state's laws, and the political aspect of the audience during securitization processes, which is primarily based on the political perception of the securitizing actor and/or audience. Thus, it assists IR scholars to broadly explore and understand the full range of the relevant actor's political considerations and constraints during securitization processes.

Third, this new conceptual framework of the audience provides a unique integration between elements from political psychology and International Relations. Thus, asserting that the element of perception and misperception has an integral part in determine which audience needs to be convinced in order to successfully conduct a securitization act, this new conceptualization combines between element from political psychology, perception and misperception, and securitization theory, which is one of the key contemporary IR theories.

After introducing a new conceptualization of the audience component, the next chapter will introduce the methodological framework adopted in this thesis.

Chapter 3

Methodological Framework

Introduction

The former chapter of this thesis indicated that securitization theory lacks a mechanism that has the ability to recognize who the relevant audiences are that need to be persuaded for successfully conducting a securitization act. In order to overcome this theoretical gap, this thesis introduced a new conceptualization of the audience component that can assist scholars to describe comprehensively the relationship between the securitizing actor and the audience(s) during securitization processes. While the new conceptualization of the audience component will be empirically illustrated in the following chapters, it is important to both explain and justify the methodological framework adopted in this thesis, a task that will be the main goal of this chapter.

The structure of this chapter will be as follows. In its first section, this chapter clarifies the ontological and epistemological approaches adopted in this thesis, both constitute the two most basic categories in social science research, as they shape the approach to the theory and the methods that the social scientist utilizes (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 17). In its second section, this chapter introduces the case studies investigated in chapters 4-7, which are constituting the empirical component of this thesis. In its third section, this chapter explains the methods of obtaining data for this thesis, which

include primary sources and secondary sources. Finally, in its fourth section, this chapter addresses the axiological and ethical questions for this thesis.

Ontological and Epistemological Positions

The goal of this section is to define both the ontological and epistemological approaches for this thesis. This is a mandatory part of this thesis, as according to Marsh & Furlong (2002, p. 17), "all students of political science should recognize and acknowledge their own ontological and epistemological positions and be able to defend these positions against critiques from other positions". Ontologically, this thesis adheres to a social constructivist approach, which in contrary to interpretivist approach, does not deny the "real" or "objective" existence of social kinds, even though they are ideational in character. Epistemologically, this thesis adheres to a scientific realist approach. This method rejects the idea that the behavior of social kinds cannot be explained, and opposes the argument that all that can be achieved is trying to understand the discourses of individuals about these social kinds. Based on the research by Wendt (1999), this section introduces three arguments that justify the possibility of studying the causal relationships between social kinds.

While ontology relates to the conundrum of the existence of a "real" world that is independent of our knowledge about it, epistemology addresses the question of what can we know about that world and how (e.g., can a researcher recognize "real/objective" relations between social phenomena? can these relations be recognized through a direct observation?). Yet, while the ontological position of a

researcher influences his epistemological position, the former is far from determining the latter (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, pp. 18-19).

From an ontological point of view, if a researcher holds a foundationalist ontological position, it means that he believes that there is a "real" world out there that is independent of our knowledge about it (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 18). Thus, adopting this ontological position may lead to a scientific (positivist) epistemological approach, which allows us, based on direct observations, to elucidate social phenomena, and then to establish causal relationships and laws. In other words, the positivist contends, the world is "real" and not socially constructed (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, pp. 22-23). Alternatively, if one holds an anti-foundationalist ontological position, he thinks that there is no real world to discover and that any attempt to understand the social world objectively is fruitless, since everyone is also a part of this socially constructed world, and thus each is influenced by how the world is constructed. Hence, the bitter truth, the anti-foundationalist argues, is that we are not able to explain any kind of phenomenon (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 19). Thus, adopting an anti-foundationalist ontological position may lead to a hermeneutic (interpretivist) epistemological approach, accordingly the world is socially constructed and hence it is not possible to establish a causal relationships between phenomena (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 26). Yet, there is a third ontological view, social constructivism, which is adopted in this thesis. According to Wendt (1995, pp. 73-74), social structures have three elements: shared knowledge, material structures, and practices. First, social structures are partially defined by shared understanding, expectations and knowledge. Thus, it is their intersubjective quality that makes these constructions social. Second, although material structures do exist, they only acquire meaning for human action through the

structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded (e.g., the US positive perception of 500 British nuclear weapons in comparison to its negative perception regarding five North Korean nuclear bombs). Third, social structures exist in practices (e.g., the existence of the Cold War, which was a structure of shared knowledge that governed great powers' relation for four decades. Yet, it was over once great powers stopped acting on this basis). Thus, based on those three elements above, one can argue that social structures are "real" and "objective", as the Cold War was, but their objectivity depends on shared knowledge (Wendt, 1995, pp. 73-75).

Adopting a constructivist ontological position may lead to a third epistemological position, which similar to the positivist position, it holds a belief that there is a "real" world out there that is independent of our knowledge about it, but differently from the positivist position, it holds a belief that there are some structures that cannot be observed. Thus, although many structures are unobservable, it is still possible to elucidate casual relations in the world (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 30). Such an approach represents a scientific realist position, which Wendt (1999, p. 47) describes it as "a philosophy of science in which the world exists independently of human beings, that mature scientific theories typically refer to this world, and that they do so even when the objects of science are unobservable". In supporting Wendt's view, this epistemological position, scientific realist, is adopted in this thesis.

Some would criticize scientific realism as not an appropriate epistemological position for social science, asserting that social kinds, which are socially constructed, are different from natural kinds. In order to refute this argument, Wendt (1999, pp. 69-75) suggests a way to integrate social constructivist ontology with scientific realist

epistemology. First, he contends that social concepts are constituted by material forces. Thus, since the State of Israel, for instance, was established by people who naturally existed, if one follows that logic, without the real existence of the natural kinds (people) who established Israel, the latter would have not been created. Second, Wendt argues that social kinds share the same self-organization characteristic as natural kinds. Thus, when a state, which is the product of people, resists an invasion, the fact that this state is constituted by shared ideas does not make this resistance any less "objective" or "real" than the material resistance of natural kinds. Third, Wendt asserts that although social kinds are dependent on the discourse/ideas of a collectivity constituting them, they are independent from individuals who explore them. According to Wendt (1999, p. 75), "the international system confronts the IR theorist as an objective social fact that is independent of his or her beliefs, and resists an arbitrary interpretation of it". In that sense, Wendt argues that collectivities, unlike the individuals, do constitute social kinds, and hence they confront the individuals as objective social facts.

In conclusion, based on Wendt's arguments mentioned above, which justify the possibility of investigating the causal relationships between social kinds, this thesis adopts the ontological approach of social constructivism, accordingly social structures are "real" and "objective", yet their objectivity depends on shared knowledge. In addition, this thesis adopts the epistemological approach of scientific realism, which holds a belief that there is a "real" world out there that is independent of our knowledge about it, yet although many structures are unobservable, it is still possible to describe casual relations in the world.

Case Study Research Design

Following the adoption of the ontological and epistemological approaches, this section discusses the research design of this thesis. This is an essential part of the thesis, as it provides a framework for the collection and the analysis of data (Bryman, 2012, p. 46). In that sense, the role of the research design is to ensure the researcher that the data collected enable him to decipher the research question as unambiguously as possible (De Vaus, 2001, p. 9).

In order to explore the audience component during securitization theory and mainly figuring out why some audiences are essential to be convinced for securitization to occur, this thesis adopts the case study research design. In essence, case study is defined as "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (Gerring, 2004, p. 342). In fact, case study constitutes one of the most popular research designs in political science, international relations and Security Studies (Bennett and Elman, 2007). According to Burnham et al (2004, pp. 54-55), there are three characteristics of a case study research design, which make it a potent tool in the researcher's methodological toolbox. First, the integration of a strong theoretical dimension into case study research design creates a wider impact. Second, despite the choosing of descriptive case studies for the research, there must be a concrete focus for the research in order to avoid a situation of a random collection of material about the selected case study. Third, a circumspect selection of multiple cases will both provide an enhanced examination of a theory and mention the stipulations under which hypotheses and theories may or may not hold. Yet, although case studies have the ability to constitute a powerful research design, there

are also certain risks associated with this research structure, especially since it is usually complicated and sometimes even hazardous to generalize from a specific case study (Gray, 2004, p. 248).

In acknowledging the limitations of the case study research design, this thesis uses four case studies, each representing a different category of securitization act in Israel. Thus, this thesis will be able to comprehensively illustrate the new conceptual framework of the audience component developed in this thesis. Similar to Lupovici (2014), this thesis argues that securitization theory could be more easily implemented in the case of Israel. Furthermore, as other scholars who have already used Israeli case studies for exploring securitization (Abulof, 2014; Olesker, 2014a, 2014b, 2018; Lupovici, 2016), this thesis indicates two main reasons why focusing on the Israeli security policies is adequate for exploring securitization. First, Israel's security experience comprises many kinds of securitization acts, such as wars, limited military operation, and peace processes. Thus, the case of Israel provides securitization scholars a fertile ground to investigate different instances of this phenomenon. Second, there is a widespread literature about how the State of Israel confronted security challenges, such as memories and scripts of those who were in the top decision-making positions during the process, e.g. leaders, ministers, and military generals. Hence, using these relevant sources can enhance the scholars' ability to learn about the role of the audience component during the securitization process.

Case Studies of the Thesis

Given that there are many cases of securitization that occurred in Israel, the main question is which cases should be chosen for illustrating the new conceptualization of the audience suggested by this thesis. For this purpose, three criteria are suggested. First, it is important for each case study to present a different type of security threat, a condition that will be able to enhance the illustration of the audience's new conceptualization by introducing a broad and comprehensive analysis of the securitization process. Second, each case study must describe a successful securitization act, not just a securitization move. Finally, given there are censorship on many Israeli security incidents, the available sources for elucidating them are limited. Therefore, this thesis explores only case studies on which the relevant research sources are available.

After applying the three criteria mentioned above, the four case studies selected for this thesis are as follows:

The first case study is the Six Day War: the Securitization of the Egyptian army. In June 1967, after Egypt had concentrated its arm forces along the southern Israeli border, an act that was followed by the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's public declarations that its goal was the destruction of Israel, Israel conducted a preemptive strike against the Egyptian army. This case study also reflects a classical securitization act taken by Israel, which was under threat not only by the Egyptian army, but was also surrounded on all sides by the enemy armies of Syria and Jordan. Although the Yom Kippur War held in 1973, in which the State of Israel was facing an imminent Egyptian-Syrian attack, was also a classic case of securitization, it does not meet all the

criteria listed above. In fact, in terms of Securitization Theory, the Yom Kippur War was only a securitization move and not a successful securitization, since the military echelon proposal to carry out a preemptive strike, as it was in the case of the Six Day War in 1967, was not accepted by the Israeli political echelon.

The second case study is the Oslo Accords 1993-1995: the Securitization of the bi-National State. Compared to the case studies mentioned above, in which Israel took military measures for securitization, in the Oslo Accords Israel chose a peace process in order to securitize an existential threat. Perceiving the bi-national state option, in which there would be no solid Jewish majority within Israel, as an existential menace to Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state, Israel signed the Oslo Accords. In fact, these agreement provided the Palestinian people an autonomy in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, creating a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians.

The third and the last case study is Operation Defensive Shield held in 2002: the Securitization of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. This case study also illustrated a classical securitization act taken by Israel, which conduct a military operation that aimed to dismantle the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure attacking the Jewish State since the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada in September 2000.

The forth case study is Operation "Outside the Box": the Securitization of the Syrian Nuclear Reactor. Held in 2007, this case study explains how the State of Israel destroyed a nuclear reactor in Syria. In fact, this case study reflects a classical securitization act taken by Israel, in which the situation of being under a nuclear bomb threat by an enemy state is considered the worst case scenario in Israel.

Potentially, a fifth case study could have been also added to this thesis in exploring how Israel confronted the Coronavirus crisis in 2020. However, since this crisis is a very recent one, there is not enough adequate resources to comprehensively explore this topic in regards to Israel. Hence, while the case study of the Coronavirus in Israel is also a classical securitization act, as the pandemic has posed a security threat, it also does not meet all the three criteria mentioned above and therefore will not be discussed in the thesis.

Research Operationalization

The thesis's main goal is to figure out why some audiences are essential to be convinced for securitization to occur. In order to solve this conundrum, this thesis suggests a new conceptualization for the audience component, one that divides the audience into two categories. The first is the **Legal Audience**, whose legitimacy to provide support for securitization stems from the state's laws. The second is the **Political Audience**, whose legitimacy to provide support for securitization stems from the political perception of the securitizing actor and/or the audience.

In an attempt to explore the audience component during the securitization process, and particularly to understand why some audiences are essential to be convinced for securitization to occur, this new conceptualization of the audience will be tailored to the four case studies mentioned above. Within each case study, the main task will be to identify who the legal and the political audiences are. While the securitizing actor's role is mainly performed by the Israeli senior military-political echelon, as it leads the

political-security agenda and hence has the political power, authority, and legitimacy to execute a securitization policy, two main entities perform the audience's role.

Given that the legal audience's identity depends on each state's rules, in the context of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, the Israeli formal political arena (the Israeli government and/or the Israeli parliament) mostly performs the legal audience's role on the Israeli side. However, since the political audience's identity stems from the securitizing actor and/or audience political perception and understanding, this thesis argues that the US administration mostly performs this role. In essence, since the United States is Israel's greatest ally, by providing Israel an economic, military and political support (Ben-Zvi, 2011), it is essential for the Israeli leadership to gain the American government's support (or its lack of resistance) for almost any securitization acts. Potentially, it is true that other entities can perform the role of the political audience, as they have some kind of influence on the Israeli decision-making process. For example, since the European Union (EU) is Israel's largest trading partner with a total trade amounting to approximately €36 billion in 2017 (European Commission, 2020), it is expected that the EU is a significant actor in Israel's national security decision-making process and the EU's relevant position is taken into consideration in Israel. Yet, the reality proves that on issues related to Israel's national security, unlike the American administration, the support or lack of resistance of the EU has never been considered as a decisive factor in the decision-making process among the Israeli leadership. Therefore, the EU has not performed the role of the political audience during the securitization process in Israel. In any case, although the Israeli formal political arena and the American administration usually perform the role of the audience component, the latter's

identity may vary depending on the securitization category and the main actors taking part in it.

In essence, in analyzing the four case studies of securitization mentioned above, and by illustrating the new audience conceptualization on each of them, this thesis will be able to provide a comprehensive picture of why some audiences are essential to be convinced for securitization to occur. Thus, it will be possible to draw conclusions and insights about audience role in securitization theory.

Methods of Data Collection

In order to explore why some audiences are essential to be convinced for securitization to occur, this section addresses the methodological approach of this thesis, which is a qualitative one. In essence, the qualitative method is traditional to social science research and according to Devine (2002, p. 199), qualitative methods are "most appropriately employed where the goal of research is to explore people's subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences". In addition, unlike quantitative methods that usually deal with large amounts of data that are investigated using statistical techniques, the qualitative methods use a small number of case studies and thus allow the researchers an in-depth analysis of each case (Read & Marsh, 2002, p. 238).

In essence, the methods selected to obtain data for this thesis consist of three main elements: primary sources analysis, secondary sources analysis, and personal

interviews. These three elements provide adequate tools for comprehensively exploring the securitization process in Israel.

Primary Sources: this element includes speeches, autobiographies, documented interviews, and documents (e.g., declassified documents of Israeli government and Knesset's committees and the American government) of both the Israeli senior political echelon and relevant figures from the Israeli formal political arena and the American government who took part in each one of the four case studies.

Secondary Sources: this element includes biographies, books, and researchers regarding each one of the four case studies of this thesis.

Personal Interviews: this element, which is considered as the most powerful and useful data tool of social scientific survey research (Baral, 2017, p. 98), includes interviews with prominent figures in Israel who were at the top level of the Israeli decision-making process. The list of interviewees includes members of the political echelon (prime ministers, defense ministers, foreign ministers, and other government members) and members of the military echelon (Shin Bet director, IDF chiefs of staff and members of the General Staff). All interviewees expressed their consent to be interviewed for the doctoral dissertation openly, were debriefed about the nature of this research, and all interviews were conducted in accordance with the principles of the APA Code of Ethics (Jackson, 2009, pp. 40-48). Although there were cases where one interviewee contradicted the words of another interviewee and vice versa, this thesis presents all the versions of the interviewees in order to provide a comprehensive and reliable picture of the chain of events that occurred during Israel's securitization acts.

List of Interviewees (in alphabetical order):

Ehud Barak- Israeli Prime Minister 1999-2001 and Minister of Defense 1999-2001, 2007-2013.

Yossi Beilin- Deputy Foreign Minister 1992-1995 and Minister of Justice 1999-2001.

Avi Dichter- Minister of Internal Security 2006-2009 and Member of the Israeli Security Cabinet during Operation "Outside the Box".

Isaac Herzog- Minister of Welfare and Social Services 2007-2011 and Member of the Israeli Security Cabinet during Operation "Outside the Box".

Tzipi Livni- Israeli Foreign Minister 2006-2009 and Member of the Israeli Security Cabinet during Operation "Outside the Box".

Shaul Mofaz- IDF Chief of General Staff 1998-2002, Minister of Transportation 2006-2009 and Member of the Israeli Security Cabinet during Operation "Outside the Box".

Ehud Olmert- Israeli Prime Minister 2006-2009.

Haim Ramon- Minister of Health 1992-1994, Deputy Prime Minister 2007-2009 and Member of the Israeli Security Cabinet during Operation "Outside the Box".

Shimon Sheves- Director General of the Prime Minister's Office 1992-1994.

Joel Singer- Legal Advisor and Member of the Israeli delegation to the secret negotiations in Oslo.

Elyezer Shkedy- Commander of the Israeli Air Force 2004-2008.

Efraim Sneh- Health Minister 1994-1996, Deputy Defense Minister 1999-2001, and Minister of Transportation 2001-2002.

Matan Vilnai- Minister of Science, Culture and Sport 1999-2002.

Moshe Ya'alon- Defense Minister 2013-2016, IDF Chief of General Staff 2002-2005 and Deputy IDF Chief of General Staff 2000-2002.

Amos Yadlin- Aman Director 2006-2010.

Ethics and Axiology

The final section of this chapter relates the questions of ethics and axiology in this thesis. While the ethical considerations are particularly related to conducting research which involves other human beings, axiology refers to the role of values that a scholar of social studies must take into consideration. In essence, the ethical principles mainly concern (1) whether there is harm to participants; (2) whether there is a lack of informed consent; (3) whether there is an invasion of privacy; and (4) whether deception is involved (Bryman, 2012, p. 135). Hence, this section mainly discusses the role of a security analyst in security studies, and addresses the ethical debate whether securitization is a positive or negative tool.

Given this thesis addresses a significant phenomenon of international security, it is important to delve into the role of a security analyst in this process. According to Dannreuther (2013), there are three dimensions that the security analyst must take into consideration, as each of them constitutes an indispensable part of his role as a researcher. Thus, these dimensions relate to the security analyst's role as (1) scientist, (2) internationalist, and (3) moralist.

First, in regards to his role as a scientist, the main question is to which extent the security analyst is able to know the truth about what he explores. While some contend that the security analyst cannot provide an objective understanding of an external phenomenon, Dannreuther (2013) asserts that the security analyst needs to treat the world as if it were real, and take into consideration not just the objective character of security threats but also how threats are being perceived subjectively. This topic was discussed previously in this chapter's first section discussing the ontology and

epistemology positions of the thesis, noting that the scientific realist approach asserts that the social reality can be studied and explained, even though it consists of social kinds that are unobservable. As it has already mentioned, this thesis holds a position that there is a "real" world out there that is independent of our knowledge about it, yet although many structures are unobservable, it is still possible to describe casual relations in the world.

Second, in regards to his role as an internationalist, the main riddle is to which extent the security analyst depends on his inherited cultural predispositions, traditions and particular processes of socialization. Thus, Dannreuther (2013) argues that the security analyst must recognize that there are multiple conceptions for security and not just one "western" standpoint. In this context, this thesis supports Dannreuther's argument and holds a view that while a security analyst needs to understand that international security challenges are complex and multidimensional, he also must acknowledge the fact that there are other security conceptions in the world. For example, while in Europe the issue of economically motivated migrants was perceived as a security threat, it was not portrayed as such in Israel, as in 1994, in order to prevent Palestinian terrorist attacks, the Israeli government approved issuing working visas to migrants in order to replace the Palestinian workers (Lupovici, 2014, p. 403). In regards to this consideration, this thesis addressed these considerations through the selection of the case studies reflecting the diversity of security challenges, which will be able to provide a comprehensive view of diverse security threats.

Third, concerning the security analyst's role as a moralist, the main question is to which extent the international security policy is an inherently normative exercise. In

that sense, Dannreuther (2013) contends that the security analyst should constantly be aware of the essentially normative political challenge of the complex interrelationship between security and other core values such as freedom, prosperity and justice. This axiological debate is also discussed regarding securitization theory in whether it is a positive or negative tool. On the one hand, in their seminal work, the Copenhagen School scholars argue that "basically, security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics" (Buzan, Waever & De-Wilde, 1998, p. 29) and hence they indicate that "avoiding excessive and irrational securitization is thus a legitimate social, political, and economic objective of considerable importance" (Buzan, Waever & De-Wilde, 1998, p. 208). Furthermore, Buzan, Waever, and De-Wilde (1998, p. 21) contend that securitization can endanger democracy, as the process is being conducted with less political transparency and democratic scrutiny and therefore it can also serve as a tool to silence the opposition. In that sense, the CS' scholars contend that securitization is always a political choice and they alternatively recommend that political actors should solve their conflicts with ordinary political tools.

On the other hand, Elbe (2006, p. 120) contends that securitization can be a positive political tool. Thus, in regarding to the potential threat from AIDS disease, he argues that "a successful securitization of HIV/AIDS could accrue vital economic, social, and political benefits for millions of affected people by raising awareness of the pandemic's debilitating global consequences and by bolstering resources for international AIDS initiatives". He also notes that "securitizing the illness could assist in freeing up more scarce resources for preventing the transmission of HIV in the future, as well as for purchasing medicines to treat those persons already suffering

from AIDS" (Elbe, 2006, p. 134). Nevertheless, in the same context, Elbe (2006, p. 120) also indicates that securitization can have a negative aspect, as the securitization of HIV/AIDS can both override the human rights and civil liberties of people who are carriers of the disease, and enable states to prioritize AIDS funding for their armed forces and elites who play a crucial role in maintaining security. Hence, as he asserts that "these dangers in turn strongly caution against framing HIV/AIDS as a security issue, giving rise to a profound ethical dilemma at the heart of recent efforts to securitize the global AIDS pandemic", Elbe (2006, p. 120) concludes that securitization theory cannot resolve this complex dilemma whether securitization is a positive or a negative political tool.

Floyd (2011, p. 436), who like the CS' scholars has a clear preference for de-securitization, was more adamant and determined to solve the conundrum concerning the positive/negative aspect of securitization. Thus, inspired by "just war theory" that argues that a just cause and the right intention determine the morality of war, Floyd proposes a mechanism that can specify whether securitization is or was morally right/justifiable. However, despite Floyd's appropriate endeavor, I disagree with her suggested model, due to the fact that her model is based on the assumption that threats are objective. In order to find out whether a securitization refers to an objective existential threat or merely to a perceived threat, Floyd suggests that one needs both to find out whether the aggressor really intends to destroy a given referent object, and to examine whether or not the aggressor has the capability to do so. Thus, she argues, if those two conditions had met simultaneously, the threat is objective. Yet, as it is mentioned in the literature review chapter, unlike the realist view, in which threats are perceived objectively, one of securitization theory's main arguments is that

threats are perceived subjectively, not objectively (Buzan, Waever & De-Wilde, 1998). For example, while the center-left wing parties perceive the demographic issue as an existential threat to the State of Israel, as they have indicated that unless Israel had withdrew from most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it would lose its Jewish majority and thus not continue to be a Jewish state, the right-wing parties contend that the demographic issue has not posed an existential threat at all (Abulof, 2014, pp. 404-406).

With respect to the argument mentioned above, this thesis holds a position that while there are securitization cases that its extraordinary measures can be perceived as a negative indeed (e.g., war and military operation), there are others that can be perceived positively (such as the Oslo Accords 1993-1995 which is one of the case studies of this thesis). Thus, this thesis asserts that in some cases and some places, securitization is in fact a positive and moral political tool that leads to positive outcomes, such as the end of intractable conflicts and reconciliation between enemies.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to clarify the methodology for this thesis. First, this chapter addresses the very important questions of ontology and epistemology. Ontologically, this thesis adheres to a social constructivist approach in which social structures are "real" and "objective", yet their objectivity depends on shared knowledge. From an epistemological standpoint, this thesis adheres to scientific realism, which acknowledges that although social kinds are different from natural

kinds, as many structures are unobservable, it is still possible to explore them from a perspective of an external observer and to describe casual relations in the world. Second, this chapter introduces the main characteristics of case study research design that is adopted in this thesis. Thus, it emphasizes how the new conceptualization of the audience component will be tailored to the four case studies of the thesis, which represent various kinds of securitization acts. Third, this chapter explains how qualitative methods are utilized to obtain the data for this thesis, as it relies on primary sources, secondary sources and interviews. Finally, this chapter discusses the questions of ethics and axiology, indicating their importance to the research conducted in this thesis.

In the following chapters, in order to illustrate the new conceptualization of the audience component suggested in chapter 2, the thesis will examine the four case studies about securitization in Israel, each representing a different type of securitization act.

Chapter 5

The Six Day War

The Securitization of the Egyptian Army

Introduction

The Six Day War is another classic illustration of Securitization. Yet, theoretically, it is a more complex one, as besides enhance our knowledge about the audience component, it also illuminates our understanding about the term "Support". After Egypt had concentrated its arm forces along the southern Israeli border, an act that was followed by the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's public declarations that its goal was the destruction of Israel, the Israel Defense Force (IDF), who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, perceived that the Egyptian army constituted an existential threat to the State of Israel and opted to securitize it. In order to eradicate this threat, the IDF suggested to execute a preemptive war against Egypt, which were the extraordinary measures needed for securitization. But in order to launch a war against Egypt, the support of the Israeli government was essential by the Israeli law. Thus, according to the conceptual framework of the audience component suggested in this thesis, the Israeli government performed the role of the **Legal Audience**. However, although the Israeli government agreed with the IDF's argument, according which the concentration of Egyptian forces was indeed an existential threat to the State of Israel, the government stated that without the Johnson administration's support, it would not be possible to launch a war against Egypt. This argument was

the result of the Sinai War of 1956, which followed by a severe crisis between Israel and the Eisenhower government. As a result, the Israeli conclusion was that they should not be involved in any military initiative against any Arab country without securing the support of the US administration. In other words, the Israeli perspective was that any significant military actions must be coordinated in advance with Washington (Rabin, 1979, p. 128). Thus, for the first time in its history, the Israeli leadership decided that it should coordinate its positions with the United States, even if the decision was related to Israel's security and existence (Melman & Raviv, 1994, p. 108). In that sense, at the beginning of the crisis prior the Six-Day War, the Israeli government, which preferred to avoid any war, opted that the American government, headed by US President Lyndon Johnson, would help to resolve the crisis, or alternatively support Israel in case the latter decides to launch a preemptive strike against the Egyptians. In terms of securitization theory, based on the political perception of the Israeli government, headed by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, that the Johnson administration's support is essential for securitization, the latter performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

Theoretically, the Six Day War comprises two dimensions of the securitization process. The first dimension is a dialog between the IDF (Securitizing Actor) and the Israeli government (Legal Audience). The Second dimension is the communication between the Israeli government (Securitizing Actor) and the American administration (Political Audience).

Figure 2: The Dimensions during Israel's Securitization in the Six-Day War

<i>Securitization Dimension</i>	<i>Legal</i>	<i>Political</i>
<i>Securitizing Actor</i>	IDF	Israeli Government
<i>Audience</i>	Israeli Government	American Administration

In addition, the Six Day War's case study illuminates another prominent phenomenon concerning the actual support that the audience provides to the securitizing actor. The case of the Six Day War illustrates that while the securitizing actor believes that he received the audience's endorsement for conducting a securitization act, in reality the securitizing actor only perceived this support as one. In other words, while the securitizing actor interprets the audience's speech act as a support, the fact is that the audience did not provide any of its acceptance for securitization. Thus, in the case of the Six Day War, while the Johnson Administration reiterated in front of the Israelis that the latter should not conduct any preemptive strike against Egypt, as US President Johnson's goal was to find a political solution for the crisis, the Israelis interpreted the American respond as a lack of resistance to an Israeli preemptive strike against Egypt. Hence, theoretically, there are in fact two types of support. First, an audience's support can be labeled as an **Objective Support**, as it is explicit and clear. For example, the Israeli government's decision from June 4 to go to war against Egypt. Second, an audience support can also be characterized as a **Subjective Support**, when it can be interpreted differently by the petitioner. For instance, the American "support" (or lack of resistance) for Israel prior the Six-Day War, which the Israeli government was based on that "support" in its decision to authorize the IDF to launch a war against the

Egyptian. In other words, for comprehensively understanding the most important factor in the concept of the term Support during Securitization, this thesis argues that what matters is not only what the Audience told the Securitizing Actor; what also matters for understanding Securitization is how the latter perceived what the former had said.

In implementing Securitization Theory's analysis tools, this chapter introduces the sequence of events that led to the outbreak of the Six Day War, from the entry of the Egyptian forces into Sinai until the Israeli government's decision to launch a preemptive war against Egypt. This chapter is mainly based on (1) official documents and minutes of both the Israeli Security Cabinet and the American government's discussions; (2) biographies of decision-makers on both the Israeli and American sides; and (3) books, articles, films and other documentary publications about the Six Day War in 1967.

The Israeli Defense Establishment prior the Six Day War

In the pre-Six Day War period, the IDF had a leading position in influencing Israel's security policy. This position, which was a fundamental component of Israeli collective consciousness, stemmed primarily from the subjective sense of threat of the Israeli society and the leaders of the state, influenced by the trauma of the Holocaust, the fresh memory of the invasion of the Arab armies in the 1948 war and the sense of siege. In fact, it is impossible to understand Israel's behavior regarding its security problems until the Six-Day War, without taking into account the element of anxiety as a central factor in the policymakers' agenda and as a very strong motive in

consolidating the IDF's status among the society (Gluska, 2016, pp. 26-28; Bar-Tal, 2007).

Despite the prestigious status of the IDF, it was the Israeli government, headed by Prime Minister and Defense Minister Levi Eshkol, which was the legal object to authorize the IDF to execute a war. The Eshkol government relied on a coalition majority of 75 Members of Knesset (MKs), including the "Alignment" ("Mapai" and "Ahdut Avoda") (45 MKs), "National Religious Party" (NRP) (11 MKs), "Mapam" (8 MKs), "Independent Liberals" (5 MKs), "Poalei Agudat Yisrael" (2 MKs), and a couple of Arab parties associated with the Alignment with two MKs each. The government had eighteen members, including twelve from Alignment, three from NRP, two from Mapam and one from Independent Liberals. However, the internal circle in the government that discussed and decided on security matters was the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs (MCSA), a committee that was in fact an early version of the "Security Cabinet", which consisted of twelve senior ministers. In the IDF's General Staff, unlike the government, there were no factions nor votes, and the decisions were not made by a majority vote. Thus, the supreme authority and the last word was given to IDF Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin. However, under the command and unquestioning authority of Rabin, Aman Director Aharon Yariv, who was in charge of assessments of the situation and intelligence, had the most influence among the IDF general staff (Gluska, 2016, pp. 37-41).

As for the confrontation with Arab countries, the Israeli intelligence did not foresee the Six Day War in advance. Aman has indeed identified a process of escalation in terrorist incidents and exchanges of fire on the Syrian border. But the transition from

this escalation to war came as a surprise, when none of the elements involved, neither Israel nor the Arab states, foresaw a war and did not want it at that time. In fact, Aman's assessment at the end of 1965 stated that although the Arab conception had not changed, as they sought the elimination of Israel as a strategic target, the Arabs estimated that their armies would be ready for confrontation with Israel only towards the end of 1967 or mid-1968. In addition, Aman estimated that as long as Egypt is still embroiled in war in Yemen, it is not expected to start a war with Israel (Gazit, 2016, pp. 144-145).

The Egyptian Army enters Sinai; Israel perceives it as a Security Threat

The main trigger to the Six-Day War was a false report by the Soviet Union to Egypt on May 13, which indicated that Israel had concentrated large arm forces on the Syrian border in preparation for a large and imminent attack on Syria (Bregman, 2016, pp. 69-70; Gluska, 2016, p. 204; Oren, 2002, p. 80; Heikal, 1978, pp. 174-175; Gilboa, 2013, pp. 908-909). Together with their ambition to create another focus of tension in the Middle East as a tactic against the Americans who were occupied in Vietnam (Bar-Zohar, 2017, p. 32; Amit, 1999, p. 230; Bregman, 2016, p. 72) and their desire to prove the Egyptian that Cairo needs more often to consult with Moscow (Heikal, 1978, p. 175; Oren, 2002, pp. 80-81), the Soviets were probably anxious about the fate of the regime in Damascus (Gluska, 2016, pp. 209-210). The Soviets' fear increased especially after statements made by Israel, which in view of the continued terrorist attacks by the Palestinian terrorist organizations supported by Damascus, a decisive military strike on Syria that aims to topple the Ba'ath regime was inevitable. Moreover, the

development of economic relations between the Soviets and Iran, as the latter hoped that the Soviets would restrain Egypt's involvement in Yemen, could be also a plausible incentive for Moscow to create false information in order to draw Nasser out of his military involvement in Yemen (Gluska, 2016, pp. 209-210).

Following the Soviet report, Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser found himself in a complicated political situation. On the one hand, most Egyptian Army chiefs contended that despite the shortcomings of their arm forces, its numerical superiority over the Israeli military is sufficient to ensure an Arab victory. However, Nasser, who had doubts over his army's ability to defeat the Israeli army on the battlefield, was objecting to start a war with Israel. On the other hand, the Egyptian president was being criticized within the Arab world for not assisting Syria in the April 7 air battle over Damascus, in which Israeli fighter jets dropped six Syrian MiG-21s (Morris, 2003, p. 287; Gazit, 2016, p. 145). Thus, Nasser realized that the key question was not whether his army could overcome Israel, but whether his regime would survive because of his further refraining from defending Syria. Therefore, since the Egyptian president feared that the collapse of the Ba'ath regime in Syria could lead to the fall of other regimes throughout the region, including his in Cairo, he could no longer position himself outside the crisis (Oren, 2002, pp. 82-83; Shlaim, 2009, p. 210; Seale, 1993, p. 136). In addition, it seems that due to Nasser's desperate situation following the failure of the Yemen war, as he tried to turn Yemen into a bridgehead to expand Egyptian hegemony to the oil-rich Persian Gulf region, a confrontation with Israel, which was an Arab consensus, could have been an excellent opportunity for him to restore his status within the Arab world (Gluska, 2016, pp. 15-17).

Eventually, on May 14, the Egyptians began to deploy large arm forces into Sinai on the pretext of deterring Israel from attacking Syria. Nevertheless, it appears that had Egypt intended to attack Israel immediately, the army's advance into Sinai would have been conducted as quietly as possible and at night. Alternatively, Nasser acted openly and demonstratively, and wanted to send a double message to Israel: Egypt does not have aggressive intentions, but it will not tolerate any Israeli aggression against Syria. In fact, the Egyptian goal was to demonstrate its military power, and thus Nasser would win the propaganda war without having to fire even one bullet (Oren, 2002, pp. 84-85). Moreover, it seems that Nasser was so concerned about his status and political prestige in the eyes of the Arab people, that even after the Egyptians discovered later that day that the Soviet reports were false, he chose to ignore this fact and continued to act as if the Israelis were indeed on the brink of attack. Hence, while ordering his army to retreat could have been seen as a humiliating alternative, the continued flow of forces have only strengthened its standing, since this step has received enthusiastic reactions all over the Arab world (Oren, 2002, p. 91; Gluska, 2016, p. 214).

The first report regarding the Egyptian army concentration in Sinai was delivered to IDF Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin in the evening of May 14. In the first impression, the IDF estimated that this was a replay of the "Rotem Crisis" from February 1960, during which Egypt had secretly deployed its armed forces on Israel's largely undefended southern front. Eventually, after Nasser declared that he had managed to deter Israel from attacking Syria, the Egyptian Army withdrew back two weeks later. Estimating that together with his goal to deter Israel from attacking Syria, Nasser also wished to strengthen his status as the leader of the Arab world, Aman Director Yariv thought

that the Egyptians would eventually withdraw their forces. However, IDF Chief of Staff Rabin did not want Israel to be surprised and embarrassed as it was during the "Rotem Crisis", when the IDF learned about the Egyptian forces' deployment after six days, during which the southern border of Israel was exposed to an Egyptian attack. Hence, after Rabin had reported about the Egyptian deployment to Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol, who also served as defense minister at the same time, he asked and received the latter's approval for a partial mobilization of reserves (Gluska, 2016, pp. 218-221; Rabin, 1979, pp. 134-135; Golan, 2017, pp. 55-57; Gilboa, 2013, pp. 933-943).

The crisis was deteriorating on May 17, after Egypt demanded the evacuation of UN forces from their positions in Sinai (Rabin, 1979, p. 136; Golan, 2017, p. 61; Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 38-39; Gilboa, 2013, p. 944). For the Israelis, the main task of the United Nations (UN) forces was to maintain the free passage from Israel's only Red Sea seaport of Eilat to Asia and Africa. Since oil from Iran was secretly imported to Israel, this route, which requires the passage through the Straits of Tiran, served as a lifeline for the Israelis. In addition, the free passage through the Straits was a symbolic value for the Israelis, a tangible expression of their victory over Egypt in 1956 Suez Crisis (Oren, 2002, pp. 110-113; Gluska, 2016, p. 217; Bregman, 2016, pp. 73-74).

Egyptian President Nasser, who in fact did not advocate the total retreat of the UN forces from Sinai, but instead was interested in redeploying them, hoped that UN Secretary-General U Thant would agree to a partial withdrawal. Furthermore, recognizing that blocking the Straits was a *casus belli* for the Israelis, the Egyptian president preferred to refrain from evacuating the UN forces in Sharm el-Sheikh and replacing them with Egyptian soldiers. In that context, Nasser recognized that his

troops could not remain apathetic while watching the passage of Israeli ships under their noses. Eventually, the Egyptians were surprised to receive UN Secretary General Thant's reply, in which a partial withdrawal was unacceptable, albeit only a full remaining or alternatively a total evacuation of all UN forces. Thus, on May 18, as he probably feared losing his prestige in the eyes of the Arab world, Nasser demanded a total withdrawal of all UN forces from Sinai (Heikal, 1978, p. 176; Oren, 2002, p. 84, 97; Seale, 1993, p. 137; Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 42-43; Bregman, 2016, p. 73). In response, UN Secretary-General Thant chose not to oppose Nasser's decision, claiming that Egypt has the right to demand the evacuation of UN forces from its sovereign territory. Thant believed that the Egyptian demand would win a majority in the UN General Assembly, and that any attempt to prevent the advance of the Egyptian army could endanger the security of UN personnel and would also question the future of UN peacekeeping operations in other parts of the world (Oren, 2002, p. 98).

Following the abandonment of all UN forces, Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol refused IDF Chief of Staff Rabin's request to recruit additional reservists out of fear that the mobilization would lead to an escalation. At this stage, Rabin also indicated to Eshkol that the Egyptians might block the Straits of Tiran within two or three days, and then Israel would be in a position that requires going to a war against Egypt. In this situation, Rabin explained, if Israel will not go to war, it will be in a complicated condition due to its lack of ability to maintain an appropriate reserve force against a large concentration of Egyptian forces in Sinai (Gluska, 2016, p. 230; Rabin, 1979, p. 139; Golan, 2017, pp. 68-69). In other words, Rabin's main concern was the possibility of continuous and indefinite concentration of Egyptian forces along the border with Israel. While for Egypt, a country with a population of almost 33 million, it was only a

logistical problem. Yet, for Israel, with its almost three million citizens, that situation was actually an existential threat. Therefore, placing a direct and immediate threat on the border of the country for a long period would require the IDF to stand mobilized and prepared against the concentration of Egyptian forces. In addition, the Israelis knew that recruitment of reservists for an unknown time will both severely disrupt life routine and carry an unbearable economic price (Gluska, 2016, p. 231).

On May 19, Aman Director Yariv formally changed his assumption, viewing the Egyptian army's deployment as offensive and not defensive anymore. Thus, the deployment of the Egyptian forces in Sinai, the removal of the UN forces, and the Egyptian Air Force's infiltrating over the nuclear reactor in Dimona on May 17, all created a cumulative effect that necessitated the change in the IDF's evaluation. As a result, Aman admitted that its former estimation that Nasser would not be embroiled in a war against Israel as long as his army was operating in Yemen and the Arab world was deeply fragmented, was no longer valid (Gluska, 2016, pp. 249-251; Golan, 2017, p. 70). In response, IDF Chief of Staff Rabin argued that the most serious danger would be a coordinated attack by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, which would be launched in coordinated air operations. In that sense, the IDF's position inferred that a preemptive attack has a significant advantage, especially in matters of air warfare, and that achieving aerial superiority is vital to prevent the enemy from attacking Israeli population centers. Hence, the IDF's mindset was above all to secure aerial superiority by a crushing attack to destroy the Arab air forces, which would lead to a swift and decisive defeat of the enemy (Rabin, 1979, pp. 140-141). At this stage, it was clear to Rabin that Israel was facing a war. Therefore, his request to Prime Minister Eshkol to

approve large-scale reserve recruitment was granted (Gluska, 2016, p. 253; Rabin, 1979, pp. 143-144; Golan, 2017, pp. 74-75).

IDF proposes to attack; Cabinet decides to turn to the Americans

On May 22, Nasser announced that the Straits of Tiran would be blocked for the passage of both Israeli-flagged ships and strategic materials destined for it. Nasser defied Israel:

"The Jews threatened war, we tell them, welcome, we are ready for war... Under no circumstances will we abandon any of our rights. This water is ours" (Tyler, 2012, p. 160; Oren, 2002, p. 113).

Practically, Nasser understood that closing the Straits would increase the chances of war, even more than the removal of UN forces. However, he was based on the assurances of his defense minister, Abdel Hakim Amer, that the Egyptian army was ready for battle. In that sense, Amer claimed that since Israel would attack Egypt in any case, the Egyptians had nothing to lose (Oren, 2002, pp. 110-113).

In the eyes of the IDF's senior command, Nasser's announcement regarding the blockade of the straits was perceived as a declaration of war against Israel, which requires an immediate military response. Moreover, in view of the Israeli struggle to obtain international recognition for their right to act in self-defense in response to the closure of the Straits of Tiran, Israel could not relinquish this prerogative without losing what remained of its deterrent power (Gluska, 2016, p. 268; Golan, 2017, p. 97).

On May 23, the IDF's senior command met with Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol. During the meeting, IDF's officials tried to convince Eshkol that the State of Israel was under existential threat, asserting that the only way to confront it was to launch a preemptive war against Egypt. Aman Director Yariv warned:

"If Israel will not respond to the closure of the Straits, there will be no longer any value to the IDF's credibility and deterrent capability... the Arab states will interpret Israel's weakness as an excellent opportunity to undermine both its security and existence" (Rabin, 1979, p. 152).

The IDF Operation Directorate Chief Ezer Weizman also urged Eshkol that the IDF must preempt, stating that time is working against Israel both politically and militarily, and therefore it is necessary to strike the Egyptian air force immediately and without any delays. Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol, who had received a telegram from President Johnson, calling on Israel not to fire the first shot nor to act without consulting the United States, decided to comply with the American request:

"Although we may have to act now, we must not operate in confrontation with the United States, which repeatedly demands that we will not fire the first shot" (Rabin, 1979, p. 152).

Thus, while Eshkol was apparently convinced by the IDF and hence acknowledged that Israel was under existential threat by Egypt, he objected to the suggested measures proposed by the military echelon. Alternatively, Israeli Prime Minister claimed that prior to a military action, Israel must first consult with the American administration (Gluska, 2016, pp. 268-269; Golan, 2017, pp. 96-97; Oren, 2002, pp. 116-117; Rabin, 1979, p. 152).

The IDF's message repeated itself at the MCSA meeting later that day. During that meeting, IDF Chief of Staff Rabin reiterate his argument that Israel must preempt:

"Nasser declared that the Israeli flag will no longer be seen in the Tiran Straits, and every ship that leads strategic materials, meaning oil, will not allow passing... What is in question today is not the passage and freedom of navigation, but all of Israel's ability to fulfill what it said - about its right to self-defense... There is a very serious matter regarding Israel's security, which, if there is no response to it, could have a meaning that is difficult to define today, because Israel's deterrence will be impaired... What can of course be done is one thing - to give Egypt a blow. The most effective blow is the destruction of the Egyptian Air Force, that is, the attack of all Egyptian airports in relative surprise, plus the advance of our concentrated forces into Sinai... The question of course - what is the other alternative, is it not worse? That is, do nothing (MCSA, 1967a, pp. 2-3).

While IDF Chief of Staff Rabin called on the political echelon to approve military action against Egypt, Foreign Minister Abba Eban suggested a different approach. Eban noted that the United States had stated that it would meet its 1957 commitment to allow free Israeli passage through the Straits. But at the same time, Eban indicated, the Americans have announced that they oppose that Israel would take military action against Egypt. Moreover, Israeli foreign minister said that the Johnson administration had asked Israel not to transfer an Israeli ship through the Straits of Tiran for the next 48 hours, hoping to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis with Egypt. In summing up his remarks, Israeli Foreign Minister Eban suggested that he would travel to Washington to ask the US government to honor its commitment to Israel, and thus

militarily escort the first Israeli ship to pass through the Straits of Tiran. Eban thought that in this way, it would be possible to know whether Israel is alone in this crisis or not. Thus, hearing Rabin's assessment that a delay of the IDF's offensive initiative by 48 hours was not fatal, and also being influenced by the US president's message, the committee members tended not to make an immediate decision on war. Some of them even totally rejected war against Egypt, claiming that while the closure of the Straits did not endanger Israel's security, starting a war with Egypt without the backing of a superpower would jeopardize Israel's existence. Eventually, at the end of the meeting, the MCSA decided to view the closure of the Egyptians as an act of aggression against Israel, and agreed to postpone the decision whether to go to war for forty-eight hours. During this period, the Israeli foreign minister, Abba Eban, will travel to Washington in order to clarify the US position (MCSA, 1967a; Gluska, 2016, pp. 270-272; Golan, 2017, pp. 97-98; Oren, 2002, pp. 117-120; Rabin, 1979, pp. 154-158; Haber, 1987, pp. 166-170).

In terms of Securitization Theory, the IDF, performing the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, believed that the Egyptian moves constituted an existential threat to the State of Israel (referent object). In order to exterminate this threat, the IDF suggested to conduct a preemptive attack against the Egyptian army, which were extraordinary measures needed for securitization. However, in order to securitize the Egyptian army, the IDF needed to obtain the support of Israeli government, which according to the Israeli law had the legal authority to launch a war. Hence, as suggested by this thesis conceptual framework, the Israeli government performed the role of the **Legal Audience**. Nevertheless, the IDF's first securitization attempt eventually failed. The MCSA, which was in fact a reduced assembly of the Israeli government, asserted that

before executing any war against Egypt, Israel must persuade the American administration to support that move. In other words, although the Israelis could have executed the extraordinary measures without the US administration's support, the Israeli government perceived it as essential for securitization. Therefore, as suggested by this thesis conceptual framework, the US administration performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

On May 25, following the entry of another Egyptian arm-force division into Sinai, the IDF's senior command contended that the security threat was immediate and that the Egyptians might soon launch a preemptive strike against Israel. Therefore, they met with Prime Minister Eshkol and claimed that in light of the concrete danger of an Arab attack, the IDF must preempt as long as the enemy has not yet completed its military organization. The IDF's senior command stressed that since the Egyptian force daily ameliorates its operational organization, any delay would both increase the critical danger of a general Arab attack on Israel and harden the possibility of a successful attack on Egypt in the near future. In addition, the Israeli military echelon claimed that Israel's diplomatic activity missed its goal, as instead of focusing on the Egyptian concentration in Sinai, which was the real threat on Israel, the political echelon dealt with the blockade of the straits. IDF Chief of Staff Rabin was decisive in favor of a preemptive strike:

"We are not sure who the initiator of the war will be, and the danger is greater as we are waiting, the Arabs are able to launch an overall strike against us, therefore we risk by losing the most significant advantage of starting the war... That could be a very severe situation... Why and how long are we going to wait?" (Rabin, 1979, p. 163).

Nevertheless, the Israeli prime minister's answer did not change, stating that the IDF will not attack unless the diplomatic moves are exhausted. However, Eshkol agreed to send a second telegram to Foreign Minister Eban in order to strengthen the message to the Americans, in which Israel is under existential threat in view of the immediate danger of an overall attack by Egypt and Syria (Gluska, 2016, pp. 283-288; Golan, 2017, pp. 106-111; Rabin, 1979, pp. 161-163).

At that time, although he continued to oppose the preemptive attack option until clarifying the American position, Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol was convinced that there was a critical danger that the Egyptians would soon attack Israel. Hence, fearing that an Arab attack was imminent, he considered to urgently summon the government in order to decide whether to launch a preemptive attack against Egypt. However, there was no way out of the trap created by Foreign Minister Eban's mission, and therefore it was necessary to wait until Eban will return to Israel or at least until after his meeting with President Johnson (Gluska, 2016, pp. 293-295).

While there was no concrete knowledge of an imminent Egyptian attack, it turned out in retrospect that the IDF's fears were justified, as the Egyptians were indeed about to launch an attack on May 27. Nevertheless, after being warned by the Americans and the Soviets that an attack on Israel could lead the US army to intervene alongside Israel, the Egyptian president ordered his army to cancel the attack (Oren, 2002, pp. 153-155; Gluska, 2016, pp. 288-290; Tyler, 2012, p. 168; Bregman, 2016, pp. 84-85).

Johnson Administration opposes Israeli Military Action

From the day he entered the White House, US President Lyndon Johnson defined Egypt as a loyal and obedient satellite state of the Soviet Union, whose goals were derived from the revolutionary aims of its patron in Moscow. Moreover, due to the Yemen War and quarrels over American aid to Egypt, the US-Egypt relations steadily deteriorated between 1964 and early 1967. On the other hand, Johnson saw Israel as a second South Vietnam, standing on the confrontation line against the forces of radicalism and aggression that the nationalist Communism had created. Therefore, the American president argued that it was essential to strengthen the State of Israel as the main stable pro-Western outpost in the Middle East, and thus the Americans began supplying conventional weapons, such as tanks and aircrafts, directly to Israel in 1965. However, the Johnson Administration had its own interests regarding the Jewish State. The Americans preferred to equip Israel militarily so that it could defend itself against Arab armies. In this way, the Johnson Administration will be able to prevent a situation in which the United States would have to fulfill its declared commitment to Israel's security in the event of an Arab attack. Apart from the strategic considerations of the American administration, US President Johnson was genuinely sympathetic to all the Israelis he negotiated, many of his closest advisers were well-known as Israeli sympathizers and his contacts with the American Jewish community were close throughout his political life. Nevertheless, for the American president, the problems of the Middle East were second priority. Thus, in 1967, Johnson gave his most attention to Vietnam. As a result, the Middle East themes were generally addressed to the State Department, whose senior officials were concerned about the

growing tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors, especially following the air battle between Israel and Syria in April 1967. Moreover, the Americans had the impression that the Soviets might seek to exploit an opportunity in the area while Washington was utterly occupied in the Vietnam War (Ben-Zvi, 2011, pp. 80-81; Quandt, 1977, pp. 54-55; Gluska, 2016, pp. 66-74).

At the beginning of the crisis, after Nasser had ordered his forces to enter Sinai, the American reaction was moderate, as the State Department believed that the "Rotem Crisis" from February 1960 was repeating itself, and that the Egyptian president only wanted to raise his prestige in the eyes of the Arab world. Nevertheless, the situation changed after the Egyptians had demanded the evacuation of UN forces, which were the only buffer zone between the two armies. Suddenly, the central concern in the American administration was that the Israelis would launch an attack against Egypt and hence Washington sought to restrain Jerusalem. At his meeting on May 17 with Israel's ambassador in Washington, Avraham Harman, under Secretary of State Eugene Rostow said to his interlocutor that since Nasser did not deviate from his rights by placing military forces on his sovereign land, Israel should not launch a preemptive strike (Oren, 2002, pp. 105-106, 136-138; Quandt, 1977, p. 56; Bar-Zohar, 2017, p. 46, 49-50; Ross, 2015, pp. 85-86). Moreover, in the same day, US President Johnson sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol, urging him to restrain himself from any military action against Egypt and to consult with the US government before taking any action:

"I would like to emphasize in the strongest terms the need to avoid any action on your side which would add further to the violence and tension in your area... I am sure that

you will understand that I cannot accept any responsibilities on behalf of the United States for situations which arise as the result of actions on which we are not consulted" (FRUS, 1967a).

The next day, May 18, Eshkol replied to Johnson by accusing Syria for escalating the tension, and ruled that Egypt must evacuate its army from Sinai. Moreover, the Israeli prime minister asked the American government to renew its commitment to Israel's security, and inform this message also to the Soviet Union. The Americans indeed delivered that message to the Soviets the next day. Thus, at the initial stage of the crisis, the American administration indeed stood by Israel. However, since they were extremely occupied in Vietnam, the Americans preferred to restrain the Israelis in order to avoid another war (FRUS, 1967b; Oren, 2002, p. 106, 136-138; Quandt, 1977, p. 57; Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 49-50; Ross, 2015, p. 86).

Following the Egyptian forces' entry into Sinai and the removal of the UN forces, Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol and Foreign Minister Abba Eban decided to conduct a political campaign whose main goal was to obtain the firm support of the American administration alongside Israel in the crisis. Therefore, in order to deter the Egyptian President Nasser from escalating the conflict and to prevent the danger of a military intervention by the Soviets alongside the Arabs, Israel hoped to receive an American unequivocal clarification of their commitment to Israel's security and freedom of navigation, which was officially given by US President Eisenhower in 1957 following the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. However, at that stage, the American position was disappointing from Israel's point of view, as the US ambassador in Israel, Walworth Barbour, made it clear to Israeli Foreign Minister Eban that the United States was wary

of statements supporting Israel, concerning that such a commitment would increase Arab fears of an American conspiracy with the Israelis (Gluska, 2016, pp. 237-240).

On May 23, after Nasser had announced the blocking of the Straits of Tiran, US President Johnson, who publicly charged that Nasser's blockade was illegal, was concerned that Israel would conduct a military action against Egypt. Hence, Johnson asked Eshkol to refrain from any military action for 48 hours (Ross, 2015, p. 88; Bar-Zohar, 2017, p. 78; Quandt, 1977, p. 60; Eban, 1978, p. 330). In that sense, although US President Johnson felt obligated to open the straits, he also wanted to forestall any Israeli military action that could embroil the Americans in a conflict that they could not afford. However, in order to prevent Israel from acting on its own, the American administration had to present a reasonable alternative without risking military involvement. Thus, when the British government had proposed the idea of the international flotilla on May 24, the Americans enthusiastically accepted the offer. In short, the Regatta plan proposed three stages: first, a struggle to pass a UN Security Council resolution demanding that Egypt would open the straits; second, in the event of a failure by the Security Council, a group of maritime nations would issue a declaration that the Straits of Tiran are international waterway and that they intend to use it; finally, had Egypt continued to maintain the blockade, a flotilla composed of ships of all these countries, backed by battleships, would be deployed to break the blockade. Nevertheless, although the earliest reactions to the Regatta campaign were encouraging, less than forty-eight hours after its birth, the plan began to evaporate, as the US' European allies, worried that their Arab oil supply would be in danger, were not enthusiastic to participate. In addition, there was insufficient support for the plan in US Congress, a support that was an essential condition for Regatta's

implementation. The fact was that following entanglement in Vietnam, the Congress was strongly opposed to further US military involvement (Oren, 2002, pp. 137-138, 177-178; Quandt, 1977, pp. 60-64; Bar-Zohar, 2017, p. 101; Ross, 2015, pp. 87-88).

As it is mentioned above, The Israeli government responded positively to US President Johnson's request by postponing the decision regarding the actual reaction in 48 hours, and Israeli Foreign Minister Eban was dispatched to Washington in order to clarify the American position. Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, the Israelis wished to persuade the American administration that the Egyptian military deployment in Sinai constituted an existential threat to the State of Israel and hence it must be securitized. Although Israel had the ability to execute a preemptive attack on Egypt without the support of the Americans, the Israeli government, which performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor** in front of the Johnson Administration, perceived the latter's endorsement as an essential factor for a successful securitization act. Hence, in terms of securitization theory and as suggested by this thesis conceptual framework, due to the securitizing actor's perception and belief, the American administration played the role of the **Political Audience** during the crisis.

On May 25, following the IDF's assessment that Egypt was about to launch an attack on Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol sent his instructions to Foreign Minister Eban to make it clear to the Americans that the concentration of Egyptian forces on Israel's southern borders constitutes an existential threat to the State of Israel. Prime Minister Eshkol wrote:

"There has been a far-reaching change in the situation of the Egyptian forces... The target now developing is not the straits but a total decisive effort against Israel... We

are being told of intentions to launch a comprehensive Arab attack on Israel... It should be made clear to President Johnson that the question is not only the opening of the straits, but primarily the danger to the very existence of the State of Israel... Can the American president tell us what practical steps he is willing to take to prevent an imminent explosion?" (Gluska, 2016, p. 284).

Later that day, Eshkol sent another message to Eban:

"Following developments over the past 24 hours, we are concerned about an Egyptian-Syrian attack at any time... In this situation, an immediate step is necessary, i.e., an American statement that any attack on Israel is tantamount to an attack on the United States... This announcement should be accompanied by instructions to the American forces in the region to coordinate its actions with the IDF against a possible attack" (Gluska, 2016, p. 285).

In practice, together with clarifying that Israel sees itself as being in immediate existential danger, Prime Minister Eshkol wanted his foreign minister to demand both explicit answers and practical steps from the Americans. Unless, Israel would have to act on its own, expecting the complete international backup from the Americans (Gluska, 2016, pp. 283-288; Rabin, 1979, pp. 161-164; Eban, 1978, pp. 344-345).

On May 25, Foreign Minister Eban landed in Washington and delivered those two letters from Prime Minister Eshkol to US Secretary of State Dean Rusk. In response, the Americans acted in two ways: first, under the guidance of US President Johnson, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Eugene Rostov urgently summoned Egypt's ambassador to Washington and delivered him a very serious warning from Johnson to Nasser not to attack Israel. Rostov warned his interlocutor that an Egyptian

attack on Israel would be an Egyptian suicide act and would require the United States to act in accordance with its commitment to Israel's security (Gluska, 2016, p. 289; Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 114-115). Second, American intelligence experts analyzed whether Israel was truly under existential threat by the Egyptian army forces. Thus, on the next day, the Americans reached a conclusion that contradicted the Israeli assessment of an immediate Arab attack. In fact, the American assessment determined that had the Arabs been the first to attack Israel, the IDF would still win every possible coalition of Arab armies within two weeks. On the contrary, had Israel attacked first, it would defeat the Arabs within one week. Therefore, the Americans held the opinion that the State of Israel was not under existential threat, and at least in the short term, time did not work against the Jewish State. That information, along with details about the Regatta plan, were transferred to Israeli Foreign Minister Eban in his meetings with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who both warned Eban against an Israeli preemptive action. Given the gap of positions between Jerusalem and Washington, the Israelis suffered a loss of credibility in the eyes of the Americans. Thus, US officials suspected that Israel had transferred this information in order to give the United States an advance notice of a planned Israeli preemptive strike. In response, Eban described the attitude in Israel as "apocalyptic" and that Israel could not take much more if it were a question of surrender or action. Moreover, Eban indicated that it was very important that he could deliver to the Israeli government that something concrete had been done about the Strait situation. In that context, the Israeli foreign minister hinted that unless there were concrete international actions to open the straits, Israel would preempt (FRUS,

1967c; FRUS, 1967d; Gluska, 2016, p. 315; Oren, 2002, pp. 140-143; Quandt, 1977, pp. 66-67; Eban, 1978, pp. 347-349; Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 118-119; Ross, 2015, pp. 88-89).

Although US President Johnson was not inclined to meet with Eban, and hence he tried to postpone their conversation, the two gentlemen finally met on the evening of May 26. The American president, who seemed calm in light of the conclusion that the military situation would not deteriorate, saw the naval flotilla as his strong card in his meeting with the Israeli foreign minister. However, Johnson knew he could not commit himself to the use of force without congressional approval. Therefore, Secretary of State Rusk recommended Johnson to take an explicit position, but no obligation, on the idea of a naval convoy that would allow the United States to delay the Israeli preemptive strike (FRUS, 1967e; FRUS, 1967f; Bar-Zohar, 2017, p. 120; Quandt, 1977, pp. 68-69; Oren, 2002, p. 142; Ross, 2015, p. 89).

At the beginning of their meeting, which was also attended by US Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara, Israeli Foreign Minister Eban contended:

"Nasser has committed an act of aggression and his objective is the strangulation of Israel... What can and will the United States do to carry out its commitments to keep the Straits and the Gulf open? What are you willing to do to enforce it?" (FRUS, 1967g, pp. 140-141).

The Second question related to the Israeli assessment regarding the Egyptian intentions, an estimation that the Americans had already declined. Eban said:

"I was receiving numerous cables from home that Egypt preparing an overall attack on Israel... The Prime Minister has told me the Israeli assessment is based on facts... What

if this Israeli assessment is true? Should there not be an American warning? Israel has to take this matter seriously since Nasser has made it clear that his objective is the destruction of Israel" (FRUS, 1967g, p. 141).

In response, US President Johnson stressed that he had defined the blockade as illegal and that he was working on a plan to open the straits, but for implementing it, the Congress must formally approve the entire plan:

"What to do and when to do it in order to assure free access to the Straits and the Gulf is another question... I am of no value to Israel if I do not have the support of the Congress, the Cabinet and the people... Going ahead without this support would not be helpful to Israel... We have a vital interest in maintaining free access to the Gulf and Strait, and we have made it clear that the closing of the Straits by Nasser would be illegal... The Israeli government should know that our best efforts and our best influence will be used to keep the Strait and the Gulf open to Israeli ships... We must now await the Secretary General's report... If we move precipitously, it would only result in strengthening Nasser... Moreover, we must do everything we can through the UN... we must see where it leads, even though we do not have great hopes" (FRUS, 1967g, pp. 141-142).

Regarding an imminent Arab attack against Israel, the American President stated that all the intelligence agencies had assessed the situation and their conclusion was that an Arab attack that was not about to take place.

"The US assessment does not agree with that of the Israelis... Our best judgment is that no military attack on Israel is imminent, and if Israel will be attacked, our judgment is that the Israelis would lick them... Time would not work against Israel... It would not

lose by waiting for the Secretary General's report and Security Council consideration... During this period, there would not be any deterioration in the Israeli military position... We know it is costly economically, but it is less costly than it would be if Israel acted precipitously and if the onus for initiation of hostilities rested on Israel rather than on Nasser" (FRUS, 1967g, pp. 142-143).

At the end of the meeting, after Johnson had assured that he would make every possible effort to open the Straits, Eban received a formal letter that summarized the American position:

"The United States has its own constitutional processes, which are basic to its action on matters involving war and peace. The Secretary General has not yet reported to the UN Security Council and the Council has not yet demonstrated what it may or may not be able or willing to do although the United States will press for prompt action in the UN. I have already publicly stated this week our views on the safety of Israel and on the Strait of Tiran. Regarding the Strait, we plan to pursue vigorously the measures, which can be taken by maritime nations to assure that the Strait and Gulf remain open to free and innocent passage of the vessels of all nations. I must emphasize the necessity for Israel not to make itself responsible for the initiation of hostilities. Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go alone. We cannot imagine that it will make this decision" (FRUS, 1967h).

Eventually, the campaign of Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban had failed. Thus, while Eban's goal was to convince the United States that Israel was under existential threat, the American message to Israel was that it should not launch an attack (Gluska, 2016, pp. 306-308; Oren, 2002, p. 148; Quandt, 1977, pp. 70-71; Eban, 1978, pp. 349-355;

Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 126-128; Ross, 2015, pp. 89-90; FRUS, 1967h, FRUS, 1967g). In terms of Securitization Theory, the Israeli government's attempts to securitize the Egyptian army's concentration in Sinai failed. Foreign Minister Eban, who was the official representative of the government, had not persuaded the Johnson administration that the State of Israel was under existential threat by the Egyptian army. Furthermore, the Americans, performing the role of the **Political Audience**, were striving for a diplomatic solution for the crisis and thus opposed any execution of an Israeli preemptive attack, which were the suggested extraordinary measures for securitization by the Israelis.

Following the American Refusal, Israel decides to wait

On May 26, the Israeli government convened. During the meeting, Prime Minister Eshkol told the ministers about the American warning to Egypt. In addition, he reported on Secretary of State Dean Rusk's statement to Foreign Minister Eban, stating that the United States has no information on Egypt's offensive tendencies and that the American president cannot commit Israel to any kind of security measures without a congressional resolution. Afterwards, Prime Minister Eshkol stood by the IDF and tried to convince the government members that an Israeli action could not be conditioned on the international political timetable. Thus, Eshkol supported the IDF's position, emphasizing the importance of the time component in taking the offensive initiative:

"...the difference of an hour can be influential... Every hour can be important and perhaps decisive" (Gluska, 2016, p. 299).

Minister of Labor Yigal Allon even strengthened the IDF's argument for going to war:

"I do not know if the Egyptians will not decide to attack tonight, in an hour, or tomorrow... Anyone who will advance by half an hour, meaning that his planes will not be on the ground when being attacked, determines the whole thing... When it turns out that the Egyptian air force has risen then it will be too late" (Gluska, 2016, p. 302).

When asked how he appreciates the time factor, IDF Chief of Staff Rabin, who three days earlier argued that another 48 hours waiting would not be critical, replied that time was pressing. Rabin also indicated that if the IDF will attack later, together with losing the element of tactical surprise, the Israeli forces will encounter more organized and fortified Egyptian forces, and hence it will lose the element of tactical surprise. Finally, Rabin concluded that the question of who would be the initiator of the war might determine its duration, its consequences, and the amount of the victims. In the end of the meeting, the Israeli government agreed that had Israel been attacked, Prime Minister Eshkol and IDF Chief of Staff Rabin could decide on any response they would see fit, but a decision on an Israeli preemptive strike would only be decided after Foreign Minister Eban returned from Washington (Gluska, 2016, pp. 299-303; Rabin, 1979, pp. 165-166; Golan, 2017, p. 115).

On May 27, Foreign Minister Eban returned to Israel straight to the government meeting, during which the IDF continued his attempts to persuade the government members that Israel was under existential threat. Thus, the military echelon urged the political echelon that a preemptive attack on Egypt must be launched as soon as possible. IDF Chief of Staff Rabin asserted:

"I do not offer the government an easy choice, but to keep waiting means to endanger Israel's security... Any postponement will cause us to pay a higher price... If we attack tomorrow, we will save ourselves precious sacrifices... If we wait another week, the Egyptians will be better prepared... In my opinion, the government must decide this evening on that matter and give the final order to the IDF" (MCSA, 1967b, pp. 10-11).

At the end of Rabin's speech, Foreign Minister Eban entered the cabinet meeting directly from the airport and began reporting on his mission. He strongly opposed the option of war, claiming that US President Johnson explicitly told him that Israel should not act first, and that it would take America two or three weeks to implement its political plans to solve the crisis. In addition, Eban argued that the Americans contradicted the Israeli assessments, in which Egypt was about to launch war. Furthermore, Israeli foreign minister said that the Americans even suspected that those Israeli estimations were tendentious assessments, intended to prepare the ground for an Israeli attack and possibly even complicate the United States. At the end of his speech, Eban asserted that since US President Johnson took responsibility for the effort to solve the crisis, the Israeli government must hold back for a few days. After the remarks of Foreign Minister Eban, the discussion among the government ministers continued. While there were ministers who supported IDF Chief of Staff Rabin's position, believing that Israel should preempt against Egypt, there were ministers who contended that starting a war without US backing was the main threat to the State of Israel. This line was led by Interior Minister Moshe Haim Shapira who opposed a preemptive strike:

"We are now facing a fateful decision for the entire State of Israel... I feel that if we attack, we will be left alone in the battle and I am afraid we will not be able to stand... out of responsibility for the matter, for our children, for the whole country, I say be patient. It is not a two-day affair, it could be a week, but it is worth it, so we do not take steps that we cannot retreat from" (MCSA, 1967b, p. 41).

Although no vote was conducted among the government, the balance of power between its members who supported an immediate preemptive strike, amongst them Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol, and those who asserted that an additional period was required, was an absolute equal. Therefore, Eshkol suggested that the government would convene the next day (MCSA, 1967b; Gluska, 2016, pp. 315-320; Oren, 2002, pp. 156-158; Rabin, 1979, pp. 169-170; Golan, 2017, pp. 123-124; Eban, 1978, p. 364).

Meanwhile, fearing that war would break out in the Middle East, the US administration decided to send additional messages to Israel in order to motivate it not to attack Egypt. In fact, US President Johnson really wanted to dissuade Israel from military action. Yet he felt unable to deliver the only thing that could prevent such a step, namely, providing a firm guarantee of the use of force to open the straits if necessary. What was needed for Johnson more than anything was time to examine the idea of the international flotilla and seek for political compromises between both sides of the crisis. Therefore, his next step was an attempt to tie the Israelis' hands, making them promise not to take any action for another two weeks. The opportunity to fulfill this demand came on May 27, when the Soviets informed Johnson that they had information indicating that Israel was planning an attack. The American president responded to Kosygin and sent an urgent message to Israel Prime Minister Eshkol, who

received it on the morning of May 28, just before the Israeli cabinet meeting, in which its members discussed whether to launch a preemptive attack against Egypt. The American president wrote:

"The Soviets tell me that they have information that you are preparing to take military action against your Arab neighbors... As your friend, I repeat even more strongly what I said yesterday to Mr. Eban. Israel just must not take any preemptive military action and thereby make itself responsible for the initiation of hostilities" (FRUS, 1967i).

Secretary of State Rusk's message was even more decisive:

"...The British and we are proceeding urgently to prepare the military aspects of the international naval escort plan, and that other nations are responding vigorously to the idea... With the assurance of international determination to make every effort to keep the Strait open to the flags of all nations, unilateral action on the part of Israel would be irresponsible and catastrophic" (FRUS, 1967i).

In addition, the American government asked for a two-three weeks delay before Israel would use force to open the strait. Practically, those American messages changed the balance of power among the Israeli government's members, who eventually formally decided to wait a two weeks period before taking any action to break the siege on the straits. From then on, the Americans began to act as if they had at least two weeks to find a solution, and the assumption was that the crucial stage would begin after June 11 (Gluska, 2016, pp. 320-321; Oren, 2002, p. 158; Quandt, 1977, pp. 71-72; Tyler, 2012, p. 171; Ross, 2015, p. 90; FRUS, 1967i; FRUS, 1967j; FRUS, 1967k).

On May 28, the government resumed its meeting. Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol had intended to request its government to make a decisive decision to go to war, but the messages he received from President Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rust, warning Israel not to launch a preemptive attack against Egypt, affected the Israeli prime minister, who eventually changed his position. Therefore, Eshkol recommended the government to wait another period of two-three weeks, in which the Americans could have the opportunity to reconcile the dispute. In this situation, by giving the Johnson Administration an additional time, the Americans could not be able to accuse Israel of having thwarted its diplomatic endeavors to solve the crisis. Even Minister of Labor Yigal Allon, one of the greatest supporters of the IDF's position, realized that there was no choice besides allowing the United States to meet its commitment. IDF Chief of Staff Rabin tried again to persuade the government members to preempt, but his attempts were in vain:

"I am not saying that the choice is easy, but I am saying that in my opinion, today's postponement of the preemptive attack on Egypt brings us back to the situation before 1956, since I do not believe that the countries of the world will open the straits for us... I am sure that in another two to three weeks, we will face the same problem with even more difficult political and military conditions... If we do not attack Egypt today, we will face a war in more difficult circumstances in the future" (MCSA, 1967c, pp. 30-31).

Nevertheless, Rabin's arguments did not convince the government ministers, who accepted Prime Minister Eshkol's position almost unanimously and formally decided that *"In light of the chances that the US government, together with other governments or on its own, will open the Straits, Israel will refrain from initiating a military action*

until a new resolution is reached within three weeks of this meeting" (MCSA, 1967c; Gluska, 2016, pp. 320-324; Rabin, 1979, p. 171; Oren, 2002, pp. 158-159; Golan, 2017, pp. 124-125; Eban, 1978, pp. 366-368).

In terms of Securitization Theory, it was the second failure of the IDF, which performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, in its attempt to securitize the Egyptian army. The Israeli government, which performed the role of the **Legal audience**, was not convinced by the IDF to support a preemptive strike against Egypt. In fact, the lack of support from the Israeli government stemmed from the opposition of the American government, which performed the role of the **Political Audience**, to an Israel military strike. For the Israeli government, the US administration's support for an Israeli military action was necessary in order to securitize the Egyptian Army. Thus, based on the political perception of the **Legal Audience**, the support of the **Political Audience** was necessary for Securitization.

Israel awaits American Action; a Unity Government is formed

Following the American position and the Israeli government's decision to avoid a preemptive attack on Egypt, the IDF and the Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol felt that Israel reached a stalemate. Therefore, given the conflicting messages sent by the American administration to Israel, Eshkol decided on May 29 to dispatch Mossad Director Meir Amit, who had warm ties with the CIA Director Richard Helms, to a secret assignment in Washington in order to clarify the position of the American administration. Amit's mission was to find out in an informal way what was happening with the international naval flotilla and the timetable for breaking the blockade. In the

Straits of Tiran. Aman Director Yariv, who suggested Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol to dispatch Amit to Washington, believed that Foreign Minister Eban's report concerning his mission in Washington had no basis in reality, and hence it was essential to know precisely what the American position would be if Israel had launched a preemptive attack against Egypt (Gluska, 2016, p. 335; Golan, 2017, p. 131; Amit, 1999, p. 237; Rabin, 1979, p. 178; Gilboa, 2013, p. 1140; Laron, 2017, pp. 278-279).

In fact, a few days earlier, Aman had begun to speculate that the Americans might actually be giving the green light to Israel to attack. Aman claimed that the Americans did not understand why Israel was pinning hopes that they would organize a flotilla that would break the siege on the Straits, and why the Israeli government was pressuring them to ask permission to attack. In addition, Aman has speculated that the Johnson Administration did not want to be recognized as if it was pushing Israel into war, and thus being involved in a conspiracy with Israel against Egypt. In fact, believing that the Americans estimated that Israel would defeat Egypt and also wondering why Israel was delaying, Aman asserted that although the Americans had claimed that they were working hard to establish an international naval force, there has been no sign of this on the ground (Gilboa, 2013, p. 1103, 1112).

In addition, following Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol's response to the US President Johnson on May 30, the Americans began to feel embarrassed about the depth of their commitment to act. Eshkol wrote to Johnson that his promise to take every measure to reopen the straits dissuaded the Israeli government from voting in favor of launching the war. In addition, Eshkol tacitly argued that Israel was approaching a point where it would have no other choice besides executing a preemptive attack, and

therefore it is essentially to dispatch the international flotilla to break the siege in the coming week or two. When Johnson received Eshkol's message the next day, May 31, he was astounded that the Israelis had truly thought that he would use all means and by all means to break the blockade on the straits. According to his perspective, Johnson merely emphasized that he would take every endeavor within his legal authority. Therefore, National Security Advisor Walt Rostow was instructed to clarify this point to the Israelis immediately and unequivocally. Thus, after his conversation with Rostow, the minister at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, Efraim Evron, conveyed a telegram to Israel, concluding that no action should be expected from the American government (Oren, 2002, pp. 176-177; Quandt, 1977, p. 73; Bar-Zohar, 2017, pp. 159-160; Tyler, 2012, p. 174, 177; Ross, 2015, p. 91; FRUS, 1967l; FRUS, 1967m; Laron, 2017, pp. 273-274).

At the same time, the Arab suffocation ring continued to tighten around the neck of the State of Israel, as Egypt and Jordan signed a bilateral defense treaty on May 30. Practically, it was a dramatic development that both accelerated the political and military timetable and undermined the Israeli government's decision from May 28 to wait a couple of weeks. This pact was the outcome of Jordan's King Hussein's fears, which increased daily as the Egyptian President's acts during the crisis enhanced the latter's popularity in Jordan and raised expectations for a fateful battle in which Palestine would be liberated. In fact, not only the Palestinians, but also the majority of the Jordanians were swept away by the rising wave of Arab nationalism, which was a phenomenon that threatened the Hashemite regime. For King Hussain, who contended that the war with Israel was inevitable, the kingdom of Jordan had two choices: either to reconcile with Nasser and join the Arab coalition in its war against

Israel; or the country would tear itself apart had Jordan remained outside the war. Therefore, the Jordanian King decided to travel to Cairo to reconcile with Nasser and sign a mutual defense treaty, in which each country obligated to provide military assistance to the other side in case it was attacked by a third party. In that sense, given that the United States refused to guarantee its kingdom's territorial integrity and was even involved in the arming of Israel, King Hussein believed that its agreement with Cairo had acquired both political and military insurance for Jordan. In addition, while the Jordanian King had probably secretly hoped that Israel would defeat Nasser before the Hashemite regime was undermined, it seems that the Israeli government's decision to wait for an international solution spread his illusions. Hence, Hussein decided to put his pride aside in order to save his rule and perhaps even his life (Shlaim, 2009, pp. 210-212; Gluska, 2016, pp. 351-352; Oren, 2002, pp. 164-168).

In the Israeli context, the danger of a Jordanian involvement in the event of war was always taken into account, but the deep rift between Jordan and Egypt and the former's connection to the West fueled the hope that it would remain outside the hostilities. However, the Jordanian-Egyptian pact removed all doubts and hopes, and it was therefore clear that the Jordanian arena would be active in the event of an eruption. Thus, in the IDF's view, placing the Jordanian army under Egyptian command and the anticipated entry of Iraqi forces into the West Bank, all created a real existential threat to Israel's Population and infrastructure concentrations (Gluska, 2016, pp. 351-352).

Eventually, the Israeli government's decision to wait couple of weeks in order to examine the international efforts led by the United States to open the Straits, the

secrecy that concealed its considerations and Prime Minister Eshkol's stuttering speech on live radio to the nation, all of these caused to severe public and political criticism on Eshkol's government. In addition, the threats of annihilation heard in the Arab media created among the Israelis an atmosphere of a second holocaust for the Jewish people. In that context, the anxiety that gripped the citizens of Israel was profound and genuine, since hundreds of thousands of Jews who lived in Israel at that time, had experienced the Holocaust themselves only two decades ago. Thus, the weak reaction of the Western powers and the belligerent voices emanating from the Arab countries created a sense of isolation and siege among the Israelis. As a result, the main demand among both the political system and the Israeli public was to replace Eshkol as defense minister and appoint someone else who knows how to deal with the Arabs. In fact, the idea of forming an emergency government began to take shape on May 22, and as the crisis deteriorated, as Prime Minister Eshkol and his government looked perplexed and helpless, that proposal gained momentum. The pressure on the government focused on one charismatic figure, the hero of the 1956 Sinai War, former IDF chief of staff, Moshe Dayan. Thus, on June 1, four days after the government's decision to wait, Prime Minister Eshkol capitulated to the pressure by nominating Dayan to the defense minister portfolio. In addition, the opposition parties Rafi (10 seats) and Gahal (26 seats), who coordinated their positions and conditioned their joining to Eshkol's coalition on the appointment of Dayan as defense minister, decided to join the government as well (Gluska, 2016, pp. 339-347; Shapira, 2014, pp. 276-278).

The most puzzling phenomenon regarding the establishment of the national unity government and the appointment of Dayan was the support of NRP leader, Interior

Minister Moshe Haim Shapira, who was considered as the most consistent and aggressive opponent of the IDF's activist tendencies. Thus, the inclusion of hawkish ministers into the government appears to be in complete contradiction to the efforts of Shapira and his colleagues in the government to prevent war. Nevertheless, the interior minister, who did not want Prime Minister Eshkol as defense minister because he did not trust him in military matters, asserted that only an activist personality could tell the Israeli public the unpopular truth, namely that a war should not be executed under the existing conditions. Therefore, Shapira's aim in joining Rafi into the government was to create a counterweight to Mapai's hawkish partner in the Alignment, Ahdut Avoda, and thus to control the activist tendencies of the IDF. For these goals, the NRP leader was ready for any arrangement that would lead to the expansion of the government. Hence, Shapira threatened Prime Minister Eshkol that had the defense minister portfolio not handed over to Dayan, his party would leave the government. In practice, Shapira's ultimatum was critical to Eshkol's coalition, which relied on the support of 75 MKs, as the resignation of the eleven NRP's MKs could have led to the disintegration of the coalition and the fall of the government. Moreover, given the wide support for Dayan's appointment as defense minister among members of Mapai, which was Eshkol's party, the latter did not have any other choice besides offering Dayan that desired portfolio (Gluska, 2016, pp. 340-341).

Perceiving an American support, Israel decides to attack

Determined in his mission to find out what the American position was, Mossad Director Amit arrived in Washington on May 31. During his meeting with CIA Director

Richard Helms, using Cold War's language, Amit stated that the failure to defeat Nasser would mean nothing less than losing the Middle East to the Soviets. In that sense, Amit argued that the first sign of this domino effect was Jordan's willingness to sign a treaty with Egypt (Tyler, 2012, p. 178). The Mossad director also indicated that the State of Israel could not remain in this difficult situation, in which the reserve army was largely mobilized, the economy is paralyzed and the IDF stands handcuffed in front of the Arab forces. Finally, Amit demanded to know the accurate schedule of the flotilla operation and its task force's composition. To Amit's amazement, Helms replied that there was no naval task force nor concrete plan of action (Amit, 1999, pp. 238-239; Oren, 2002, pp. 184-185; Gluska, 2016, pp. 386-387; Bregman, 2016, pp. 85-86). The next day, June 1, Amit met Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and told him that Israel would be able to wait another three or four days at most, and not three weeks like the government had decided. In addition, claiming that Israel did not want any American soldier to fight for it, the Mossad director requested his American interlocutor three things: isolating the arena from any Soviet intervention attempt; US assistance to Israel within the UN during military action in order to enable the IDF to complete its missions; and filling the IDF's armory after the war. In response, McNamara asked how long the fighting would last and how many casualties would be. Amit estimated that the war would last for about a week and that the number of casualties would be around four thousand. McNamara, who had no reservations nor warnings, said to Amit that he read him loud and clear. In practice, McNamara opposed an Israeli preemptive strike on the fear that it might spur the Soviets to intervene, and thus oblige the Americans to intervene militarily in support of Israel. However, Mossad Director Amit, who later claimed that he had not received any green

light from the Americans, albeit he had his own interpretation to conversations with them, perceived from McNamara's response that the Americans were no longer rejecting an Israeli military act against the Egyptians. Thus, if US President Johnson's aim was to defuse Israel's fears and gain additional time for diplomatic activity, his goal was clearly missed as Mossad Director Amit was convinced more than ever that Israel is not benefiting from waiting, but rather that its prolongation only increases its losses (Amit, 1999, pp. 240-241; Oren, 2002, pp. 185-186; Gluska, 2016, pp. 386-387; Ross, 2015, p. 93; FRUS, 1967n; Bregman, 2016, p. 86).

Meanwhile in Israel, during the MCSA meeting held on June 2, the IDF continued to argue for a preemptive strike. Aman Director Yariv claimed that the US administration would not oppose an Israeli attack and that a pre-emptive strike should be launched:

"The United States does not intend to act seriously to break the naval blockade by force or to take concrete steps to solve the crisis between Israel and Egypt... We believe that the United States understands that Israel must act... even if the Americans continue to claim otherwise and publicly demand that we do not fire the first shot, we must act".

IDF Chief of Staff Rabin urged the political echelon to authorize a preemptive strike before it would be too late:

"Time is not on our side... a military and a political strangulation ring is tightening around us... I do not believe anyone else will remove it from our neck... We do not have any permission to wait until a situation that makes it difficult for us to thwart their intention will occur... There is a crucial importance to the question of whether the first initiative will be in our hands... The air battle and the opening initiative will have a

decisive impact on the outcome of the battle... We must act now... In a week or two, the situation will be difficult and we will suffer more casualties".

The Israeli Air Force commander Mordechai Hod reiterated Rabin's argument and stressed that operationally it was important for the IDF to be the first to attack:

"There is a very important effect for every 24 hours that pass... Although we can accomplish our task even if we will postpone the attack, we will have to invest a lot more effort, time and casualties, in order to achieve the same outcome that can be obtained today or tomorrow".

The new defense minister, Moshe Dayan, supported the IDF's position:

"The Egyptian entrenchment process will inflict greater casualties for the IDF, but this is not the only reason for the urgent need to attack... The question is how long we can operate militarily until an international intervention will end the war... We will probably have to act within a time limit of three to four days... As long as the Egyptian army is not properly prepared in Sinai, we can quickly break through its formation and thus complete the achievements of the war... If we delay, the breakthrough will be extended... If we do not accomplish our plans, our partial achievement will be construed by the Arab propaganda as a situation of no decisive victory over the Egyptians and as an Israeli failure".

Nevertheless, Prime Minister Eshkol continued to defend the government's decision from May 28, according which Israel gives the American president the time he asked for finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis:

"We will need President Johnson's help and support... We want to persuade him that we have not deceived him and that we have given the necessary time for the political effort... no two days before nor two days later will determine the fate of the war".

Thus, at the end of the meeting, the IDF was again unable to obtain the approval of the political echelon to launch a preemptive strike against Egypt (Gluska, 2016, pp. 359-366; Rabin, 1979, pp. 179-181; Golan, 2017, pp. 151-158; Haber, 1987, pp. 204-212).

Despite Prime Minister Eshkol's standing in favor of the government's position, he held later that day consultations with Defense Minister Dayan, Foreign Minister Eban, Labor Minister Allon and IDF Chief of Staff Rabin. At the end of their meeting, they all agreed that it was necessary to go to war not before June 5 and that the proposal would be submitted for the government's approval at its next meeting (Gluska, 2016, p. 366; Rabin, 1979, p. 181; Haber, 1987, pp. 212-213). This decision was reinforced by the result of the mission of Mossad Director Amit, who reported that he was impressed that the American administration wanted Israel to release them from the international flotilla matter and that they would have welcomed an Israeli action had it ended with an Israeli victory. In fact, Amit recommended waiting another week before the IDF would attack, in order to provide additional time for diplomatic activity that would increase US support for Israel. However, Dayan and Rabin vehemently opposed Amit's argument, claiming that any delay of the attack on Egypt could endanger Israel's security. Thus, both Dayan and Rabin argued that in light of the reinforcement of the Egyptian forces and the improvement of their deployment, every day that passes makes it harder for the IDF to operate, and that any additional waiting

may cost the IDF thousands more casualties. Eventually, Eshkol was convinced that there was no escape from a preemptive strike on Egypt, and that the decision to go to war would be presented to the government the following morning (Gluska, 2016, pp. 389-390; Amit, 1999, pp. 242-243; Golan, 2017, pp. 174-176; Haber, 1987, pp. 215-218).

The government indeed convened on June 4 to decide whether to launch a preemptive strike against Egypt. During the meeting, the military echelon continued its endeavors to convince the political echelon to support a preemptive attack. Aman Director Yariv claimed that Egypt sees the clash as inevitable, and therefore continues to bring additional forces into Sinai. Moreover, Yariv reported to the committee members that Egypt had de facto taken control of the Jordanian army. In conclusion, Yariv indicated that as time passes, the chances of an offensive Egyptian initiative increased, and hence it is clear that the IDF should preempt.

Defense Minister Dayan reinforced the IDF's position:

"If the enemy will preempt, the initiative will be taken from the IDF, all the operational planning will go wrong, and the IDF will be pushed into the rear, which is almost the entire territory of the State of Israel... The passing time increases the accumulation of enemy forces and their fortification, and hence the price of fighting will increase by thousands of casualties to our forces... We are on the edge of our ability to win the war... We will begin the diplomatic campaign in a difficult situation, but it will be possible to live in terms of the military situation".

PM Eshkol said:

"Had I not seen the danger of life and death that threaten the State of Israel, I would prefer to wait another week... Yet the situation we heard from Minister Dayan and from General Yariv was not yet two or three days ago, and only a blind person cannot see the choke ring that they want to put us into".

Foreign Minister Eban interrupted Prime Minister Eshkol and read the attenders the letter that had just arrived from US President Johnson, who reiterated on the American position, which rejected an Israeli preemptive attack:

"I must emphasize the necessity for Israel not to make itself responsible for the initiation of hostilities. Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go alone. We cannot imagine that it will make this decision".

Johnson continued to report on his government's endeavors to solve the crisis:

"We are moving ahead in our diplomatic efforts... to secure a declaration by the principal maritime powers asserting the right of passage through the Strait and Gulf... We are also exploring on an urgent basis the British suggestion for the establishment of an international naval presence in the area of the Strait of Tiran. As I said to Mr. Eban, there is doubt that a number of other maritime powers would be willing to take steps of this nature unless and until United Nations processes have been exhausted. We must continue our efforts to mobilize international support for this effort. Our leadership is unanimous that the United States should not move in isolation".

However, it was the last paragraph of Johnson's letter that made the Israelis perceived that Mossad Director Amit carried the real message from the Americans, namely that

the United States would have welcomed an Israeli military action if it ended with an Israeli victory:

"On the matter of liaison and communication, I believe our relations can be improved. We have completely and fully exchanged views with General Amit".

Minister of Labor Yigal Allon stated:

"Johnson's letter and Amit's report indicate that the Americans prefer to leave the job to Israel... It is better that they will criticize our actions and that we will remain alive, than to be eulogized on our graves".

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan repeated his argument for a preemptive strike:

"A preemptive strike in surprise will disqualify one hundred enemy planes, which are worth more than any additional weapon Israel can receive... Our only chance to win the war is that we will be the initiators and will manage it according to our intention... There is a limit to our ability to win a war to be waged by the enemy; there is also a possibility that Israel may lose that kind of war".

After Dayan's words, there was no longer any argument in the government. All the members of the government, apart from the Mapam ministers, were united around the defense minister's proposal:

"The government states that the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan are prepared for an immediate frontal attack that threatens the existence of the State of Israel. The government decides to take military action that will liberate Israel from encirclement and prevent the attack on it by the forces of the United Arab Command. The government authorizes the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense to approve the

date of the operation" (Gluska, 2016, pp. 388-394; Golan, 2017, pp. 176-177; Oren, 2002, pp. 196-198; Haber, 1987, pp. 218-221; FRUS, 1967o).

The next day, the morning of June 5, Israeli Air Force planes attacked the Egyptian forces in Sinai and the Six Day War began. Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, the Israeli government, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, gave its support for the extraordinary measures suggested by the IDF. While perceiving the Egyptian deployment in Sinai as a security threat to the State of Israel, the Israeli government refrained from authorizing to IDF to launch a preemptive attack against Egypt as long as the American administration, which performed the role of the **Political Audience**, did not grant its support or its lack of resistance to those suggested extraordinary measures. Thus, only after the Israeli government perceived that the Americans were not opposing an Israeli preemptive strike anymore, the former authorized the IDF to attack the Egyptian army and the IDF's securitization act was successfully completed. Moreover, as the Israeli government's support was clear and explicit, and not an ambiguous decision that can be interpreted differently by the securitizing actor, this kind of support can be characterized as an **objective support**.

In regards to the American "support" for securitization, in retrospect, the Johnson Administration did not deliver the Israelis any act of support for an Israeli preemptive strike against Egypt. In essence, the Vietnam commitment made the Americans less willing to come to Israel's aid (Allin & Simon, 2016, p. 34). Therefore, US President Johnson made far-reaching efforts to warn the Israelis against preventive action and urged them to consult with his administration before acting on their own. Thus, Johnson was able to extract from Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol a promise not to act

before June 11 (Quandt, 1977, pp. 76-77). However, given the claims that the American administration has constantly sought to signal Israel to act on its own (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 42; Shlaim, 2005, p. 239; Bregman, 2016, p. 86), Washington has never made an official decision to allow Israel to take action, and the plan for the international flotilla has not been formally removed from the agenda (Gluska, 2016, pp. 385-386). On the contrary, US President Johnson negates Israel's need for military force, and hence the Israeli interpretation seems to be clearly wrong. The key for understanding Johnson's position lies in his fear that the United States would be dragged into another war in addition to Vietnam and even be involved in a confrontation with the Soviet Union. In that context, it seems that the American President feared that had Israel got into trouble or the Soviet Union would intervene, America would have to intervene militarily. Therefore, opting to prevent any Israeli preemptive attack, Johnson asked the Israelis not to rely on the United States if they were in trouble afterward (Quandt, 1977, pp. 76-77).

Practically, the Israelis perceived President Johnson's speech act as a lack of resistance for an Israeli securitization. Thus, in terms of securitization theory, contrary to the Israeli government's decision to authorize the IDF to launch a war against Egypt, which was characterized as an **Objective Support** for securitization, the American's response can be characterized as a **Subjective Support**. Since the Israeli government, who performed the role of the Securitizing Actor during the securitization dialog in front of the American administration, perceived that the latter did not oppose an Israeli preemptive strike (while the Johnson Administration was in fact rejecting an Israeli attack), it seems that the Israelis based their opinion on a false interpretation. Therefore, this case study clearly emphasizes that in order to investigate

comprehensively the process of securitization, it is not only sufficient to find out whether the audience granted its support for securitization or not; it is also a necessary condition to explore how the securitizing actor itself interpreted the audience's reply.

Conclusion

Israel's road to the Six Day War in 1967 is a case study that well illustrates the audience's model during the securitization process offered in this thesis. In addition, this chapter shed light on the fact that there are two kinds of support provided by the audience component during Securitization. While the first type is defined as **Objective Support**, which is a clear and explicit support that cannot be ambiguous, the second kind is defined as **Subjective Support**, which can be interpreted differently by the securitizing actor and the audience. Therefore, since during the securitization process, it is the securitizing actor who receives the audience' support that is needed for a successful securitization act, a support which is not merely objective but also subjective, it is not only sufficient to find out whether the audience granted its support for securitization or not. However, it is also a necessary condition to investigate how the securitizing actor itself interpreted and perceived the audience's reply. Thus, the illustration of the Six Day War perfectly emphasizes this argument. In essence, as the dialog between the Israeli government (Securitizing Actor) and the American Administration (Political Audience) demonstrated, the former believed that he received the latter's endorsement for conducting a securitization act. In other words, the securitizing actor interpreted the audience's speech act as a support, while in fact

this audience did not provide any of its acceptance for securitization. Thus, in the case of the Six Day War, while the American reiterated in front of the Israelis that Israel should not conduct a preemptive strike against Egypt, as US President Johnson's goal was to find a political solution for the crisis, the Israelis interpreted the American respond as a lack of resistance to an Israeli preemptive strike against Egypt.

In conclusion, the audience's support can be distinguished into two forms: first, it can be labeled as an **Objective Support**, when the audience's securitization endorsement is explicit and clear, e.g., the Israeli government's decision from June 4 to launch a war against Egypt; second, the Israeli-American dialog prior to the Six-Day War unequivocally confirms the fact that the term "support" can additionally be characterized as a **Subjective Support**, as it can be interpreted differently by both the securitizing actor and the audience.

Chapter 6

The Oslo Accords 1993-1995

The Securitization of the bi-National State

Introduction

The Oslo Accords is another case study that illustrates an Israeli securitization act. However, compared to the case studies discussed in previous chapters in which Israel took military measures for securitization, in the Oslo Accords Israel chose a peace process in order to securitize an existential threat. These agreements, signed between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during 1993-1995, emanated from the pragmatic approach of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who thought that the Israeli-Arab conflict was not beneficial to Israel's national security. Rabin contended that the continuation of the conflict could lead to a scenario that would endanger the existence of the State of Israel, believing that time was not on Israel's side and that peace had to be promoted. In that sense, Rabin perceived the bi-national state option, in which there would be no solid Jewish majority within Israel, as an existential menace to Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state. In order to tackle this menace, Rabin promoted the Oslo Accords for providing the Palestinian people an autonomy in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and thus creating a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians that would ensure the future of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

In terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, perceived the bi-national state option as an existential threat to the State of Israel. In order to eliminate this threat, Rabin argued, Israel must obtain peace with the Palestinians. Therefore, he promoted the Oslo Accords for providing the Palestinian people an autonomy in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and thus creating a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians. Being the extraordinary measures promoted by Rabin for securitizing the bi-national state option, the Oslo Accords, which aimed to create a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians and thus ensuring the future of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, were based on a simple plan. In the first phase, which would last five years, an autonomous Palestinian Authority (PA) would be established in most of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. During this period, when Israelis and Palestinians would realize that coexistence could exist, Israel and the PA were supposed to agree on a permanent solution. In this context, although the agreement did not guarantee the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, all sides were well aware that an autonomous PA was a substantial step toward the creation of a Palestinian state.

In order to successfully securitize the bi-national state option, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin needed to convince two prominent audiences:

First, Rabin needed to obtain the support of both the Israeli government and then the Israeli parliament (Knesset). Without the support of these two audiences, which had the legal authority to approve an Israeli withdrawal from territory, the Oslo Accords would not have any legal validity and the State of Israel cannot actually execute and implement any agreement. Therefore, in terms of Securitization Theory and as

suggested by this thesis audience conceptualization, the Israeli government and Knesset performed the role of the **Legal Audience**.

Second, although Israel independently conducted its own foreign policy, it was important for Rabin to coordinate most of his moves in the international arena with the Americans, as his inclination was to attempt to obtain American support for his policies on important Middle East negotiations issues prior to finalizing them. Thus, since Rabin perceived Washington's support as an indispensable condition for any agreement between Israel and the Arabs, the Clinton Administration performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

In essence, the Oslo Peace Process was a gradual securitization process of which three main agreements were signed between the State of Israel and PLO during 1993-1995. Signing the "Declaration of Principles" (DOP) on September 13, 1993, was the first phase of Rabin's securitization policy in order to create a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to the first accord, the PLO recognized the State of Israel and pledged to reject violence, while Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner for negotiations. The second phase was the "Gaza-Jericho Agreement" that was signed on May 4, 1994, accordingly agreeing that Israel would partly withdraw from both the Jericho area in the West Bank and from the Gaza Strip, and that the PA would be established and receive the control of these areas. The third agreement, "Interim Agreement", was signed on September 28, 1995, in which Israel agreed to withdraw during October-December 1995 from the Palestinian cities and villages (27% of the

West Bank and 90% of Gaza Strip), transferring all the security and public authorities relating to those areas to the PA.

Given that the Oslo peace process was a gradual securitization process of which three main agreements were signed between Israel and the PLO, besides the support of those audiences mentioned above, Rabin also needed to ensure a majority for his government in the Knesset. Otherwise, since the Israeli parliament's composition after the election in 1992, within the left-center wing parties had a very slight majority of only 61 to 59 MKs (Members of Knesset) over the right wing parties, there was a higher possibility that any other coalition might not be able to continue with the path of the Oslo peace process. Practically, these elements, the support of the audiences and his government's survival, completed each other as Rabin needed to ensure them both in order to conduct the Oslo Accords and thus to execute his securitization policy. Consequently, as part of Rabin's securitization policy, as the Israeli Prime Minister had to ensure the survival of his government in order that the Oslo peace process would not be halted, Rabin's agenda was sometimes dependent on other issues that were unrelated to the Israeli Palestinian Conflict.

Theoretically, the Oslo peace process comprises two dimensions of the securitization process. The first dimension is a dialog between Israeli Prime Minister Rabin (Securitizing Actor) and US President Clinton (Political Audience). The Second dimension is dialog between the Israeli Prime Minister (Securitizing Actor) and the Israeli government and Knesset (Legal Audience).

Figure 3: The Dimensions during Israel's Securitization in the Oslo Peace Process

<i>Securitization Dimension</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Legal</i>
<i>Securitizing Actor</i>	Israeli Prime Minister	Israeli Prime Minister
<i>Audience</i>	American Administration	Government and Knesset

In implementing Securitization Theory's analysis tools, this chapter describes the sequence of events that led to the signing of the three agreements between Israel and the PLO in the years 1993-1995. This chapter is mainly based on (1) official documents and minutes of the Knesset sessions; (2) interviews with Israeli decision-makers at the time; (3) biographies of decision-makers on both the Israeli and American sides; and (4) books, articles, films and other documentary publications about the Oslo Peace Process.

The Israeli Palestinian Conflict prior the Oslo Accords

Throughout most of the first millennium BC, Jews made up the majority of the population in the current territory of the State of Israel (including the West Bank) and controlled most of its land. It was only during the first century AD following the Roman invasion that the Jewish sovereignty over the land came to an end and most of the Jewish population was exiled. From then until the 19th century, as repeated invasions and counter-invasions occurred by Persians, Arabs, Turks, Crusaders, Mongols, Mamluks and once again Turks, various people ruled the territory. Eventually, just before the Jewish-Zionist immigration began in 1881, the population of the land

numbered 475,000, of whom 400,000 were Muslims, 42,000 Christians and only 20,000 Jews. Most of the Jews were ultra-Orthodox and concentrated mainly in Jerusalem, where they made up about half of the city's population, and in the cities of Hebron, Safed and Tiberias, which were important locations to Judaism. At that time, Palestine did not exist as a unified geographical entity. Its inhabitants, like all the Arabic-speaking communities in the area, saw themselves as subjects of the Ottoman Empire that ruled the area for centuries, and not as members of any Arab nation (Morris, 2003, pp. 15-17; Karsh, 2010, pp. 8-9; Shpak-Lissak, 2008; Shpak-Lissak, 2018).

The Jewish-Zionist immigration to Israel began in 1881, and was led by the Zionist movement, which arose about a quarter of a century before the phenomenon of Arab nationalism began (Morris, 2003, p. 34). The Zionist movement, which sought to restore the Jewish people back to its historic homeland and sovereign life in the Land of Israel, was spurred on by outbursts of anti-Semitism against Jews in Europe and fed by the secularization process among the Jewish population on the continent. In fact, both the shock caused by the pogroms in the Russian Empire in 1881-1884 and the Dreyfus affair in France in the 1890s, prepared the ground for the prosperity of Zionism (Morris, 2003, pp. 24-25). Thus, between the years 1881-1903, a period known as the "First Aliyah", about 30,000 Jews immigrated to Ottoman Palestine and established twenty colonies (Morris, 2003, p. 29). By 1908, Jews had purchased about 400,000 Dunam (99,000 Acre) throughout the Land of Israel, which had been sold by prominent Arab families (Morris, 2003, p. 46; Karsh, 2010, pp. 15-16).

Consequently, the purchase of land and the Jewish settlement led to anger and resentment among the Arab community, claiming that the Jews were dispossessing

the Arabs of their land. Thus, while in the eyes of the Zionist Jews their activity was the fulfillment of a return to their homeland after 2000 years of exile, believing that their return would bring great economic benefit to the Arab inhabitants of the land, the Arabs perceived the Zionism as a colonialist movement that came to plunder their territories (Black, 2017, pp. 21-31). In essence, the roots of the conflict between Jews and Arabs at that time lay in the fact that while the Arabs wanted to preserve the Muslim and Arab character of the area, the Zionists wanted to radically change the status quo by turning a country whose population was Arab into a Jewish homeland (Morris, 2003, p. 55).

In January 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement was signed between Great Britain and France, which effectively left the territory of the Othman Palestine in the hands of the former (Morris, 2003, p. 75). In parallel, Jews continued to immigrate to the area, and by 1917, they made up about 10% of the population (Black, 2017, pp. 19-20). In November of that year, the Zionist movement received the support of Britain, when the latter announced the Balfour Declaration. The British Secretary of State Lord Balfour informed the World Jewish Agency's representative Lord Rothschild that the British government recognizes the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, understanding that nothing would be done to infringe on the religious and civil rights of non-Jewish inhabitants in Palestine. While the Jews perceived the Balfour Declaration as an important achievement, the Arabs felt cheated by the British (Black, 2017, pp. 11-13; Morris, 2003, p. 77-82; Bregman, 2016, pp. 6-7; Khalidi, 2020, pp. 23-24). However, the establishment of an independent Arab state in Palestine was not the goal of the local Arab population. In practice, until 1920, most of the Arab society expected that Palestine would be the southern part of

Greater Syria, which included present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Israel. Only after the San Remo Conference in May 1920, at which it was decided to establish the British Mandate for Palestine, and following the expulsion of King Faisal from Syria in July 1920 by the French, the Palestinian Arabs began to speak about the establishment of an independent Arab state instead (Morris, 2003, pp. 90-92; Black, 2017, p. 43-44).

The Palestinian Arabs' demand for national independence was often accompanied by acts of violence on their part against the Jewish population in Palestine. The first major nationalist violence incident took place in April 1920 in Jerusalem and ended in the deaths of five Jews and four Arabs (Morris, 2003, pp. 97-98; Black, 2017, p. 42). In May 1921, the Arabs again launched a violent campaign against the Jews, and at the end of the clashes, 47 Jews and 48 Arabs were killed (Morris, 2003, pp. 102-103; Black, 2017, p. 46). Yet despite the Arab violence, Jews continued to immigrate to Palestine. Thus, in 1925 the number of Jews there increased to 108,000, and the Jewish leadership continued to buy land and establish settlements (Black, 2017, pp. 49-53).

Towards the end of the 1920s, Palestinian Arabs realized that if the influx of the Jewish population continues, the former would become a minority in the land. Therefore, the Arab Palestinian leadership, led by Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, began to stir up the Arab street, contending that the Jews were striving to harm the holy religious Muslim sites. The main claim of Arab propaganda was that the Jews aspired to take over Haram al-Sharif, which was the third most important place in Islam, and to build the Jewish Temple on its ruins. Thus, in August 1929, against the background of the issue of Jewish prayer rights at the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Arabs launched a wave of violence against the Jews. At the end of the violence that spread

throughout the country, 133 Jews and 116 Arabs were killed. In Hebron was the great massacre in which 64 ultra-Orthodox Jews, including women and children, were brutally murdered by their Arab neighbors (Morris, 2003, p. 111-116; Black, 2017, pp. 56-60; Karsh, 2010, p. 20).

Another wave of violence by the Arabs was recorded in the years 1936-1939, which was directed against both the Jews and the British authorities. It was the largest and most prolonged revolt against the British in any country in the Middle East. Palestinian Arabs demanded that the British government end Jewish immigration to the country and allow elections to the Legislative Council. In that context, Arab violence gave rise to a phenomenon of Jewish terrorism, and thus from the end of 1937, Jewish opposition organizations began to carry out terror attacks against the Arab population. Eventually, the Arab revolt was suppressed by the British army and many of the Palestinian leadership including the Mufti fled the country. Consequently, the Arab revolt greatly weakened the Arab population and strengthened the Jewish public, which stopped its economic dependence on the Arab population (Morris, 2003, p. 128-157; Black, 2017, pp. 74-92).

In 1947, the British decided to leave the country and transfer the problem of Palestine to the UN, which had to decide on the fate of the land inhabited by 1.4 million Arabs and 600,000 Jews. Thus, on November 29, the UN reached Resolution 181 which recommended that Palestine be divided into two states: a Jewish State on 55% of the territory and an Arab State on 44% of the land, leaving the Jerusalem area under UN supervision. While the Jews welcomed the UN resolution, the Arabs rejected it and threatened that any attempt to carry out the partition plan would lead to war (Morris,

2003, p. 177-181; Bregman, 2016, pp. 9-12; Black, 2017, p. 107-109). Eventually, following the adoption of the UN resolution, a civil war broke out between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine. The confrontation lasted until the British left the country in May 1948, and was conducted mainly in the territory allocated to the Jewish state. Yet after the British departure and the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, Arab armies of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq launched a war against the new Jewish state, with the aim of destroying it and liberating all of Palestine. The war lasted until the beginning of 1949 and ended in a scorching defeat of the Arab armies by the Jewish forces. At the end of the war, the State of Israel covered 78% of the former Mandatory Palestine, while the remaining 22% of the territory, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were ruled by Jordan and Egypt respectively. Another result of the war was the formation of the Palestinian refugee problem, 700,000 in number, most of whom fled and some were expelled during the war. The Palestinian Arabs, who refused any compromise with the Jews, were left without a homeland and were in fact scattered among the various Arab states (Morris, 2003, pp. 185-246; Black, 2017, pp. 109-130). In addition, the war indirectly created another refugee problem. Thus, against the background of the exact same conflict, an even larger number of 800,000 Jews were forced to leave the Arab countries and flee to Israel (Julius, 2018; Yemini, 2014, p. 42; Morris, 2010, pp. 443-447).

Following the Six Day War in 1967, in which Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Jewish State found itself responsible for more than a million Arab Palestinians living in these territories. Although Israel was willing to return some of the territories in exchange for peace agreements with Arab countries, the latter refused to recognize Israel and negotiate peace with it. In response, Israel decided to

base its borders on its security needs and not return to the pre Six Day War lines, known as the 1967 borders. Moreover, in parallel with the continued Israeli control of the Palestinians, Jewish settlements began to be established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the resettlement of Jews in the territories symbolized the Jewish people returning to its historic homeland, for the Palestinians the settlement enterprise was a factor that undermined their national aspirations. Thus, the Palestinian issue has created a dilemma in Israel that has not been resolved to this day. On the one hand, Israel rejected the idea of granting autonomy to Palestinians living in the territories occupied in the Six Day War for fear that it would develop into a Palestinian state. However, on the other hand, Israel did not want to add one million Arabs as Israeli citizens, an act which would completely undermine the demographic balance to the detriment of the Jewish majority (Morris, 2003, pp. 311-322).

Another significant challenge for the State of Israel that emerged after the Six Day War was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Headed by Yasser Arafat, this Palestinian organization called for the destruction of the Jewish state and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on its ruins. Following the Six Day War, The PLO, which had become the dominant force for the liberation of Palestine, endeavored to provoke a popular uprising among the Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories against the Israeli occupation. However, after this attempt was thwarted by the Israeli security forces, the PLO began executing guerrilla operations against Israeli targets. Until 1970, the PLO operated from Jordan until its expulsion by the Jordanian authorities. It then began operating from Lebanon, until it was expelled from the country in 1982 following the Israeli invasion during the First Lebanon War. Throughout this period, the PLO carried out notorious terrorist attacks against Israeli

targets, including the shocking murder of eleven Israeli athletes during the 1972 Munich Olympics (Morris, 2003, pp. 343-360).

The majority of the Israelis vehemently opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and perceived the PLO as a terror organization. In order to avoid the establishment of a Palestinian state led by the PLO, the suggested solution was to reach an agreement with Jordan. This path, known as the "Jordanian Option", aimed to bypass the PLO and reach a pact with Jordanian King Hussein on the establishment of a confederation between Jordan and the Occupied Territories. Thus, Jordan will assume responsibility for the Palestinians living in the territories, without Israel being forced to relinquish a military presence on the Jordan River, an area that was perceived as essential to Israel's national security. In fact, it was in the common interest of Israel and Jordan. Although outwardly King Hussein supported the PLO, he clandestinely opposed the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the territories, fearing that it could undermine the stability of the Hashemite regime in Jordan. Consequently, the "Jordanian Option" gained momentum in the second half of the 1980s, when Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Jordanian King Hussein held secret talks. However, following the rift in his relationship with the PLO and given his political inability to publicly enter into direct negotiations with Israel, Hussein needed a political pretext to open direct talks with Israel. Thus, the idea was to hold an international conference, in which Jordan would be given legitimacy to negotiate with Israel. In Israel, however, opinions were divided on the idea of holding an international summit. While the Peres-led Labor Party supported it, the Likud party, led by Yitzhak Shamir, opposed the idea of holding an international conference. Shamir's argument was that the summit could lead to international pressure on Israel

to make concessions in the negotiations. Nevertheless, on April 11, 1987, Peres, who had meanwhile vacated his post as prime minister to Shamir and was appointed foreign minister as part of the unity government, reached a secret accord with Jordanian King Hussein, known as the "London Agreement". Although this pact stipulated that an international conference would be held, both sides agreed that it would not have the power to impose solutions on the parties. After the summit, Peres and Hussein agreed, direct negotiations between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, without the involvement of the PLO, would launch. The idea was to present the agreement as an American document. But when Peres showed the agreement to Shamir, the latter feared that it would allow PLO members to join the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Eventually, following opposition from Shamir and senior Likud figures, who saw the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of Greater Israel, the Reagan Administration refused to present the "London Agreement" as an American initiative and the plan vanished (Shlaim, 2009, pp. 366-392; Shilon, 2017, pp. 473-542).

In December 1987, the First Palestinian Intifada broke out, which eventually brought an end to the "Jordanian Option". The spark that ignited the Palestinian uprising was a car accident in the Gaza Strip, in which an Israeli truck driver ran over four Palestinians to death. The Palestinians, for their part, saw the accident as a deliberate act and launched riots that spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the Intifada erupted completely spontaneously and without any prior planning on the part of the local Palestinian leadership in the territories or the PLO, the latter was quick to jump on the bandwagon and play a key role in directing the uprising. At the same time, the Islamist Hamas movement arose, which began to challenge the

nationalist-secular PLO led by Arafat. In any case, the intifada received widespread coverage in the international media that severely damaged Israel's image. Thus, while Israel was portrayed as a brutal occupier, the Palestinians were introduced as people fighting for their national rights. In addition, the Palestinian Intifada had implications for Jordan. Fearing that the Palestinian uprising would spread to all of Jordan where Palestinians made up about 80% of the population, Jordanian King Hussein declared in July 1988 the severance of Jordan's ties with the West Bank. Thus, the Jordanian king actually brought an end to the Jordanian option and left the arena to the PLO. However, in order to produce real political achievements from the uprising, the Palestinian local leadership began to put pressure on the PLO leadership based in Tunis, urging it to meet the conditions that would allow negotiations with Israel. Hence, Arafat, who feared that the local leadership in the territories might take the place of the PLO, declared in December 1988 that the PLO recognizes the State of Israel and UN Resolutions 242 and 338. In addition, Arafat stated that the PLO was renouncing all forms of terrorist activity, and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Shlaim, 2009, pp. 393-405; Bregman, 2014, pp. 131-161; Morris, 2003, pp. 523-568; Black, 2017, pp. 272-292).

Although it managed to remove the threat from Jordan, the PLO's status was severely damaged by its support for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, whose army invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Thus, after the January-February 1991 Gulf War in which the Iraqi army was defeated by an international coalition led by the United States, the latter was determined to exclude the PLO. Instead of Arafat and the PLO, it was agreed that the Palestinians would be represented by a group of local prominent figures from

the West Bank and Gaza Strip as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Thus, in October 1991, the Madrid Conference convened, which was the opening signal for peace negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, and in December, bilateral talks began in Washington between Israeli and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegations. But the fact was that the Washington talks were fruitless and there was no real progress towards an agreement. On the one hand, the Palestinian delegation was controlled by the PLO leadership in Tunisia, which did not allow any progress in negotiations with Israel as long as it did not take an active part in them. On the other hand, after the fall of the Israeli unity government in March 1990 over a dispute regarding the peace process, a right-wing government was established led by the Likud, which saw the West Bank and Gaza Strip as integral parts of Greater Israel. Either way, the gap in positions between the two sides left no chance for an Israeli Palestinian agreement (Bregman, 2014, pp. 164-169; Morris, 2003, pp. 569-572; Hirschfeld, 2000, pp. 78-88; Shlaim, 2009, pp. 436-444).

Labor wins the 1992 Election; Rabin becomes Prime Minister

In January 1992, due to their opposition to the Washington talks, the two right-wing parties "Tehiya" and "Moledet" withdrew from the Likud-led government. As a result, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, whose government was left without a coalition majority, decided to call early elections (Shamir, 1994, pp. 299-301; Arens, 1995, pp. 287-289). For the Labor Party, which has been in opposition since 1990, the 1992 election was a golden opportunity to return to power. At the time, the Likud government led by Shamir was sharply criticized. Palestinian terror attacks were a

matter of routine, the Israeli economy faltered with roughly 12% unemployment, the peace process was at an impasse, and Israel-US relations were at a low ebb due to the Bush administration's refusal to grant Israel \$10 billion loan guarantees as long as Israel did not commit to halt settlements construction (Goldstein, 2006, pp. 382-384; Arens, 1995, pp. 319-320). But before the 1992 election, Labor had to decide who would lead it and be the party's candidate for prime minister. This question was decided in February 1992, when Yitzhak Rabin defeated Shimon Peres in the party leadership primaries (Barzilai, 1996, p. 247).

Rabin's victory substantially assisted Labor in its battle with Likud over the Israeli leadership. In contrast to Peres, who was perceived as a dovish left-wing politician among the Israeli public, Rabin, who previously served as prime minister (1974-1977), defense minister (1984-1990) and IDF chief of staff (1964-1968), was perceived as a tough hawk. In fact, the left-wing line that Peres led as party chairman during the 1980s, such as his peace initiatives and support for the idea of the international conference, distanced from the Labor Party soft right-wing voters, who opposed Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines and the establishment of a Palestinian state (Bar-Zohar, 2006, pp. 588-589). Rabin, on the other hand, who rejected any negotiations with the PLO, stated that he supported autonomy for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In addition, willing to evacuate, in the context of the permanent status agreement, only settlements located in the heart of the Palestinian population, which were established for political purposes, Rabin supported the continued existence of security settlements such as in the Jordan Valley and the Jerusalem area (Goldstein, 2006, pp. 387-388).

In essence, Rabin held a pragmatic approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict and thought it was not beneficial to Israel's national security. Contending that the continuation of the conflict could lead to a scenario that would endanger the existence of the State of Israel, Rabin believed that time was not on Israel's side and that peace had to be promoted with urgency (Aronoff, 2014, p. 101). Thus, he acknowledged two factors with a substantive potential to threaten the State of Israel.

First, Rabin perceived the bi-National State Solution, in which there would be no solid Jewish majority within Israel, as an existential threat to Israel's existence as a Jewish state (Sheves, 2020, pp. 661-662; Sneh, 2020). In fact, until the outbreak of the First Palestinian Intifada Rabin supported the "Jordanian Option", according to which Jordan would be the partner in an agreement with Israel to resolve the Palestinian problem (Goldstein, 2006, pp. 354-356). However, the First Palestinian Intifada brought Rabin to realize that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was damaging Israel's national security. He assumed that in order not to be considered by the international community as an apartheid state, Israel would need to grant full citizenship rights to the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, an act that would eventually end Israel's existence as a Jewish state (Peri, 2006, pp. 34-35; Aronoff, 2014, p. 116; Clinton, 2004, p. 540; Goldstein, 2006, pp. 366-367). Consequently, Rabin wanted to ensure a solid Jewish majority of approximately eighty percent among the Israeli population:

"I belong to those who do not want to annex 1.7 million Palestinians as citizens of the State of Israel. Therefore, I am against what is called Greater Israel... In the present circumstances, between a bi-national state and a Jewish state, I prefer a Jewish state..."

The exercise of sovereignty over the entire Mandatory Land of Israel means that we will have 2.7 million Palestinian citizens in the State of Israel... This may be a Jewish state within its borders, but bi-national in its content, demography and democracy... That is why I am against annexation" (Neria, 2016, pp. 25-26).

Given his acknowledgement that the Palestinians were located at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Rabin was convinced that an agreement with the Palestinians must be reached first. In that context, Rabin believed that an Israeli-Palestinian peace pact would have dropped the Arab states' motivation to go to war against Israel in order to retake the territories occupied in the Six Day War (Neria, 2016, pp. 26-27). Furthermore, Rabin argued that in an era of ballistic missiles, most of the occupied territories were not essential to Israel's security (Clinton, 2004, p. 540). Hence, depicting settlements located in the heart of the West Bank as not essential to Israel's security, Rabin contended that it would be enough to defend Israel from the Jordan Valley (Neria, 2016, p. 28). Consequently, the combination of rejecting the idea of Greater Israel with the annexation of 1.7 million Palestinians living in the occupied territories, together with his anxiety of losing the Jewish majority in Israel in favor of an Arab majority, encouraged Rabin to start a peace process with the Palestinians in order to create a full separation from the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Neria, 2016, p. 28; Inbar, 2004, p. 203).

The second factor Rabin perceived as a threat to the State of Israel was continuation of the arms race in the Middle East, which would eventually lead to an acquisition of nuclear weapons by enemy Arab states. In that sense, Rabin believed that an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement would not only ensure the future of the State of Israel

as a Jewish and democratic state, but it would also reduce threats posed by Israel's close neighbors. Thus, Rabin argued that had Israel lived in peace with its neighbors, the likelihood of an attack by other states, such as Iraq and Iran, would be greatly reduced, even if they were under the control of Islamic fundamentalist elites (Ross, 2015, p. 256-257; Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 34; Aronoff, 2014, p. 116).

On March 1992, Rabin stated:

"I believe that if we succeed in reaching peace or near peace with the Palestinians, with Jordan, and then with Syria, in the next five to seven years, we will reduce a large part of the motivation for an arms race" (Inbar, 2004, p. 188).

In this context, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin's vision was primarily based on the security aspect, especially on preventing situations that could endanger the security and existence of the State of Israel (Neriah, 2016, p. 29). Rabin was worried that Russia might rise out of the ashes as a pro-Arab world power, and that Iran and Iraq might develop nuclear weapons and thus demonstrate their power and their policy of denying peace to the other countries in the region. Thus, recognizing that there was a temporal window of opportunity, in which the United States is the only superpower and that Israel is stronger than its enemies in the Middle East, Rabin opined that it was a ripe moment to pursue peace agreement with Israel's Arab neighbors, which must be exploited before the opportunity would vanish. In other words, given the international window of opportunity would be eventually closed in five years, Rabin contended that time was working against Israel (Rabinovich, 2017, pp. 198-199; Inbar, 2004, p. 187; Morris, 2003, p. 573; Ross & Makovsky, 2020, pp. 882-887).

Politically, the Labor Party's positions reflected Rabin's views. In contrast to the Likud party, which stated that Judea and Samaria were an integral part of the State of Israel and adamantly rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state, the Labor's election platform in 1992 called for peace talks with Arab countries based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Thus, while Labor opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state, it expressed support for the establishment of autonomy for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while leaving the Jordan Valley and Gush Etzion under Israeli control. In addition, the Rabin-led Labor Party pledged that Jerusalem would remain united under Israeli sovereignty and that no Palestinian right of return would be allowed to Israel (Labor, 1992).

Eventually, the 1992 election results provided a majority of 61 seats to the center-left parties' bloc headed by the Labor Party, which as stated supported a territorial compromise with the Palestinians. The political bloc of the right-wing parties, which opposed an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the establishment of a Palestinian state, won 59 seats and was sent to the opposition benches. After winning the election on June 1992, Labor Party Chairman Yitzhak Rabin assembled a coalition of 62 parliament members (MKs), which included the left-center wing Labor Party (44 MKs), leftist "Meretz" (12) and the right-center orthodox party "Shas" (6). Practically, Rabin could have joined into his coalition the two Arab Parties, "Hadash" (3) and "Arab Democratic Party" (2), yet he refrained from choosing this option (Goldstein, 2006, pp. 390-391). Thus, despite staying out of the government table, both Arab parties agreed to provide Rabin their support for any political initiative with the Palestinians, and hence block any attempt of the right-wing

opposition to overthrow the Labor-led government (Ramon, 2020, pp. 1304-1305; Grinberg, 2007, p. 70; Gozansky, 2013).

Consequently, Rabin's coalition was not homogenous. While Labor and Meretz were natural political allies, being located on the left side of the Israeli political spectrum regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Shas was a religious orthodox party that its voters were identified more as right wing supporters. Therefore, the party was not a natural partner for any peace process with the Palestinian based on the two state solution vision headed by the Labor Party. Nevertheless, although Shas did not belong to the center-left bloc and therefore was not a natural partner to the government, it was important to Rabin that Shas would be part of his government for two main reasons. First, Rabin perceived Shas and its chairman Aryeh Deri as a bridge to both religious public and right-wing voters in Israel. Second, Rabin feared that a significant part among the Israeli Jewish public would not provide any legitimation to a government that relies on the support of the Arab parties. In addition, pursuing peace agreements with the Palestinians and the Arab states would require a Jewish majority in the Knesset, Rabin needed the support of Shas to secure such a majority (Sheves, 2020, pp. 461-468; Ramon, 2020, pp. 1305-1306; Goldstein, 2006, pp. 390-391). In return for its membership in Rabin's government, Shas received budgets for its religious institutes, and its chairman Aryeh Deri served as the interior minister (Dayan, 1999, p. 341; Rabinovich, 2017, p. 233).

The Road to the "Declaration of Principles"

At the beginning of his term, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin announced that he intends to complete the negotiations for the granting of autonomy to the Palestinians in the territories within six to nine months. Thus, Rabin contended in front of the Knesset that peace agreements with the neighboring Arab countries would enhance Israel's security:

"The intention of the government, which I have the right and the honor to lead, is indeed to maximize the chances of advancing peacemaking with the Arab states and the Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip... In my opinion, peace is an important element that guarantees the security of the State of Israel... A peace without any security does not mean anything to me, but real peace increases the security of the State of Israel" (Rabin, 1992).

Despite his argument that peace agreement with the Palestinians was essential for Israel's security, Rabin rejected any negotiation with the PLO, which was the official representative organization of the Palestinians. Perceiving the PLO as a purely terror organization, Rabin preferred to negotiate with a local Palestinian leadership from the occupied territories. Thus, Rabin continue to ignore the PLO and its chairman Yasser Arafat (Ramon, 2020, p. 1325; Bar-Zohar, 2006, pp. 604-605; Yatom, 2009, p. 300; Pundak, 2013, p. 16; Inbar, 2004, p. 199; Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 38).

At that time, talks were taking place in Washington between an Israeli delegation and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, which was composed of local representatives from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But in practice, the Palestinian team in the joint delegation was controlled by and received instructions from the PLO leadership in

Tunisia headed by Arafat (Khalidi, 2013, p. 48). The truth was that these talks were futile and did not create any significant outcomes. Arafat, who wanted to indicate to the Israeli side that any progress with the Palestinians could be reached only through a direct negotiation with the PLO, did not grant any mandate for the Palestinian delegation in Washington (Bar-Zohar, 2006, pp. 614-615; Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 32; Indyk, 2009, p. 35). In this context, Arafat and the PLO leadership in Tunis were concerned about the strengthening of the Palestinian local leadership in the territories, both from PLO supporters such as Faisal Husseini, and from Hamas, whose militant line vis-à-vis Israel has gained popularity among the Palestinian public. Thus, fearing that an alternative local Palestinian leadership would be established at his own expense, Arafat hoped to conduct direct negotiations with Israel (Inbari, 1994, pp. 172-178). In fact, already in September 1992, senior PLO official Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) submitted a proposal to Israel through Egypt to open secret negotiations with the PLO (Makovsky, 1996, p. 22). Another proposal to Israel by Abu Mazen's emissaries was sent in October to Rabin's associate, MK Ephraim Sneh (Sneh, 2002, p. 23). But Rabin, for his part, was adamant not to negotiate with the PLO, preferring the format of the Washington talks in which a local Palestinian team was a constituent member of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

On the other hand, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Rabin's bitter rival in the Labor Party, believed that only through negotiations with Arafat and the PLO would it be possible to reach an Israeli-Palestinian agreement. Just like Rabin, Peres also believed that the division of the land could preserve Israel as Jewish and democratic and fortify its existence. In order to fulfill his vision, Peres argued that in the first stage, the Palestinians should be offered the idea of "Gaza First", in which the PLO would be

given control of this territory. Peres even brought up this idea to the Egyptians during his visit to Cairo in November 1992, hoping that the latter would offer it to the Palestinians as an Egyptian initiative. In addition, Peres brought the "Gaza First" paradigm to Rabin on January 8, 1993, but received no explicit response from the latter. In fact, Peres initially argued that negotiations should be conducted with local leadership from the territories. Thus, after the formation of the Rabin government, Peres made efforts to promote a settlement with local Palestinian leaders in the territories such as Faisal Hussein. Nevertheless, Hussein and his friends made it clear to the Israeli Foreign Minister that they had no ability to make decisions, and therefore he should conduct the talks directly with the PLO in Tunis (Gil, 2018, pp. 114-121).

In parallel with the Peres initiative, a secret channel of talks began to develop between Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak, two Israeli academics linked to Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, and senior PLO official Ahmed Qurie (Abu Ala). It all started on November 30, 1992 when Hirschfeld and Pundak met in Ramallah with Hanan Ashrawi, who was the spokeswoman for the Palestinian team in the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Washington talks. Ashrawi, who was very concerned about the rise of Hamas' power among the Palestinians, offered Hirschfeld to meet with Qurie on his upcoming visit to London, a proposal that was also acceptable to PLO chairman Arafat. On December 4, Hirschfeld met Qurie in London, and the latter proposed opening a secret negotiation channel in order to reach a declaration of principles on an interim agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. After the meeting, Hirschfeld updated Beilin on Qurie's proposal, which in turn gave its blessing to the move. Later that day, Abu Ala and Hirschfeld met again and agreed to meet next time in Norway, whose government agreed to provide all logistical assistance for

the talks (Hirschfeld, 2000, pp. 92-96; Pundak, 2013, pp. 38-65). In fact, already in September 1992, the Norwegians offered to host secret talks between Israel and the Palestinians, when Beilin's Norwegian counterpart, Jan Enebled, offered to secretly negotiate with Faisal Husseini. But the initiative did not materialize, in light of Rabin's opposition that Peres would meet with Husseini, and so Beilin did not even raise the matter with Peres (Beilin, 1997, 70-73).

Simultaneously with the upcoming opening of the secret channel in Norway, after a number of terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas in which five IDF soldiers were killed during December 1992, including the abduction and murder of an Israeli Border Police officer by Hamas terrorists, Prime Minister Rabin decided to deport 415 Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives to Lebanon. In a protest against the deportation, the Palestinian delegation announced the cessation of Washington talks (Beilin, 1997, pp. 77-78; Makovsky, 1996, p. 24; Pundak, 2013, pp. 73-75).

Nevertheless, the secret channel in Oslo took place as planned, when on January 20, 1993, in a town near the Norwegian capital, Hirschfeld and Pundak met with Qurie and two other Palestinian representatives, Hassan Asfour and Maher al-Kurd. Qurie, who clarified that Arafat and Abu Mazen support the secret channel in Norway, explained that the PLO is concerned of losing the Palestinian street to Hamas, whose status had been greatly strengthened due to the Israeli deportation of Hamas members. In order to bring about progress in the negotiations, Qurie proposed to his Israeli interlocutors the idea of "Gaza First," but stressed that the PLO expects that the withdrawal from Gaza will not come at the expense of withdrawal from the West Bank. In fact, entering the Gaza Strip was a lifeline for the PLO, which lost its status

following its support for Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War. Yet Arafat and the PLO leadership in Tunisia wanted to know that the interim agreement with Israel would not last forever. On February 11-12, a second meeting was held in Oslo, at the end of which both parties reached a draft interim agreement. The draft stipulated a five-year interim period would begin in which Israel would transfer civilian self-government powers to the Palestinians, elections would be held in the occupied territories, Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip, and negotiations on a permanent settlement would begin (Beilin, 1997, pp. 79-87; Pundak, 2013, pp. 90-128; Qurie, 2008a, 40-96; Hirschfeld, 2000, pp. 111-112).

At this point, Beilin realized that it was time to involve Foreign Minister Peres. Similar to Rabin and Peres, Beilin, who was considered the ultimate leftist of the Labor Party, believed that an Israeli Palestinian peace agreement was in Israel's security interest, which would ensure its future as a Jewish and democratic state (Shilon, 2017, pp. 85-89). Thus, on February 14, Beilin revealed to Peres about the secret channel in Oslo, and presented him with the draft as a document that could serve as a basis for American mediation between the parties. A few days later, Peres showed the draft to Rabin, who for his part did not object to the channel in Oslo being continued. In addition, while expressing disbelief in what was happening in Norway, the Israeli Prime Minister stressed that he feared that the new channel with the PLO could harm the Washington talks. Therefore, Rabin demanded to continue the channel as private academic talks and not create the impression that he himself was behind it (Beilin, 1997, pp. 87-89).

At that time, the Israeli prime minister was very hesitant about which negotiations path to pursue: Syria or the Palestinians. In February, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, who said that had Israel withdrawn from the Golan Heights, Syria would be willing to sign a full peace agreement with Israel and agree to the necessary security arrangements (Indyk, 2009, p. 33). Given the fact that peace agreements would involve painful concessions, including withdrawals from the territories, Rabin believed that it would be difficult to move forward on both fronts because public opinion in Israel would not be able to bear withdrawals from both the Golan Heights and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Foreign Minister Peres, on the other hand, who believed that the Syrian president would not agree to sign a peace agreement with Israel without a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, urged Rabin to move forward on the Palestinian path and tried to persuade him to open negotiations with the PLO on the idea of "Gaza First". But Rabin was very skeptical about the Palestinians' ability to abide by the agreements. For him, it would have been better to leave the Gaza Strip unilaterally and close it hermetically (Gil, 2018, pp. 123-125). The Israeli prime minister's perception of Gaza was even backed by an internal survey conducted for him in March 1993, which stated that 75% of Israelis were in favor of an interim agreement with the Palestinians on the idea of "Gaza Jericho First". In fact, Rabin was even very surprised by the higher results, as he thought the outcome would be only 50%. Thus, this may be one of the reasons why Rabin, who was suspicious of the route in Oslo, gave the green light to Peres to continue the talks (Sheves, 2020, pp. 650-651).

Even in his talks with representatives of the US administration, Rabin was not unequivocal about his preferences in the peace process. During a visit to the United

States in March, Rabin did present his doctrine to US President Bill Clinton, noting that he was seeking peace with Arab countries in order to enhance Israel's security:

"I have seen many wars... I am willing to take risks for peace... There is a certain amount of time before fundamentalism reaches its peak and before Iran achieves weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles... Many people ask me what is the point of making peace in the inner circle when the external circle acts the way Iran does... My answer is that making peace in the immediate circle will reduce the danger in the outer circle" (Rabinovich, 2017, p. 204).

Nevertheless, the Israeli prime minister did not clearly state which route he would prefer to take. On the one hand, in his meeting with US Secretary of State Christopher in February 1993, Rabin said that peace with Syria would be a strategic achievement for Israel that would reduce the immediate danger from Iran. The Israeli prime minister also stressed that while in Syria there is a leader who knows how to make decisions, the Palestinians do not have a uniform leadership (Indyk, 2009, p. 33; Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 37; Ross, 2015, p. 260).

On the other hand, Rabin did not rule out progress on the Palestinian track. In March, Rabin suggested to the Americans that they offer the Palestinians the appointment of Faisal Husseini, who was the senior representative of the PLO's local Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories, as head of the delegation to the Washington talks. Husseini, who lived in East Jerusalem, was not allowed to participate in the delegation because Israel opposed the participation of Palestinians from East Jerusalem in the peace talks, aiming at not giving an impression that Israel recognized any Palestinian affiliation with East Jerusalem. In fact, Rabin believed that in this way

he could enable the Palestinian delegation in Washington to neutralize Arafat's influence and thus reach an agreement with Israel on a Palestinian autonomy in the territories. Christopher did warmly embrace Rabin's idea, but in the end Hussein refused to come to Washington, arguing that Israel must talk to Arafat and the PLO in order to reach an agreement (Indyk, 2009, pp. 41-42; Ross, 2015, p. 261). But at the same time, Rabin hinted to the Americans that he agreed to negotiate with the PLO, realizing that the delegation in Washington had no legitimacy to move forward without Arafat's authorization (Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 38; Rabinovich, 1998, p. 123).

Either way, the US administration had its interests in the Middle East, and President Clinton's decision was to prefer the Syrian route. For the Clinton administration, the overarching goal was to formulate a concept that would protect American interests in the Persian Gulf, an area that contained two-thirds of the world's fuel reserves, and would be consistent with the priorities in the Arab-Israeli peace process. Given America's vital strategic interest was to ensure the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, a fuel that propelled Western and Asian economies, the US had to prevent Iraq and Iran from reaching a regional hegemonic status and thus threatening the pro-American Arab states in the Gulf. Thus, the Clinton Administration decided to adopt a policy of "Dual Containment" vis-à-vis Iraq and Iran. In this context, Clinton believed that had the United States succeed in bringing Syria to the peace camp, the risk of regional conflict would be greatly reduced by Iraq and Iran remaining isolated, Israel's northern border with Lebanon would stabilize, and it would be easier to move forward in the Israeli Palestinian peace process (Indyk, 2009, pp. 34-54).

Relations with the United States were very important to Rabin. In fact, the coordination with the US administration was an integral part of the Israeli prime minister's political perception. In practice, Rabin saw the United States as Israel's only supporter in the international arena. Rabin understood this mainly during the Yom Kippur War in 1973, when European countries, fearful of Arab countries anger and their ability to halt oil supplies, refused to allow Americans to use their bases and ports to replenish Israel's military inventory during and after the war (Ross & Makovsky, 2020, pp. 845-854). In Rabin's eyes, the world can be portrayed as a pyramid led by the only superpower, the United States, and all international activity and diplomacy were based on Washington's good will. According to Rabin, the closer you got to the top of the pyramid, the more you would be able to influence decision making and ensure security. Therefore, although Israel independently conducted its own foreign policy, the Israeli prime minister was very careful to coordinate most of his moves in the international arena with the Americans. In that sense, Rabin has repeatedly declared that he will not risk the three billion dollars that Israel receives every year from the US. Thus, the Israeli Prime Minister allowed himself to act independently as long as he followed the strategic understanding that existed between Jerusalem and Washington and without undermining US interests (Neria, 2016, pp. 166-169). Nevertheless, recognizing that Israel's supreme interest is the strategic alliance with the United States, Rabin recoiled from an American intervention in the negotiations between Israel and the Arabs. For the Israeli Prime Minister, the optimal scenario was a secret and direct Israeli-Arab negotiations, in which the Americans were called at a relatively later stage in an endeavor to remove obstacles and become a signatory to the agreement. Consequently, Rabin perceived the support of the American

administration as an indispensable condition for any agreement between Israel and the Arabs (Rabinovich, 2017, pp. 210-211; Ross & Makovsky, 2020, pp. 864-865).

In this context, it was important to Rabin that the talks in Washington would continue. The reason was not because the Israeli prime minister thought the talks were important. But because he felt uncomfortable with their cessation by the Palestinians due to his decision to expel Hamas members. Thus, wanting to signal to the new US administration that he was interested in the peace process, Rabin asked Peres to order the Israeli delegation in the secret Oslo discussions to ask the Palestinians to resume talks in Washington (Beilin, 1997, p. 90; Beilin, 2020). Peres, who was very surprised by the PLO's forthcoming positions in Oslo and realized that this was an opportunity to reach an agreement, feared Rabin, who was very suspicious of his foreign minister. Hence, in order not to arouse in Rabin the suspicion that the Peres-led Oslo track was intended to sabotage the Washington talks, the Israeli Foreign Minister ordered that the prime minister's demand be fulfilled (Pundak, 2013, pp. 184-185). And indeed, at Rabin's request, after the third meeting on March 20 in Oslo, the Israelis asked their Palestinian counterparts to resume the Washington talks. Thus, in order to show that he controls the Palestinian side, Arafat ordered the Palestinian team in the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to resume negotiations in Washington. In practice, Arafat's decision was to the displeasure of members of the Palestinian team to the Washington talks, who knew nothing about the secret channel in Norway (Beilin, 1997, pp. 91-97; Pundak, 2013, pp. 150-166).

Meanwhile, during the continuation of both negotiation tracks in Washington and Oslo, Rabin continued to warn implicitly regarding the bi-national state's threat and argued that a separation from the Palestinians must be conducted for Israel's security:

"The main question around which there are differences of opinion is what the solution is... Whether to annex the two million Palestinians living in the territories and turn them into Israeli residents or to find a way of coexistence while preserving the Jewish uniqueness of the State of Israel as the state of the Jews... We must bring separation to provide security... Without separation, there will be no personal security... The sharper the separation, the more security will be restored" (Rabin, 1993a).

On April 27, talks resumed in Washington, during which the Americans tried in vain to bring about a breakthrough between the parties. The Americans offered a mediation paper to both sides but the Palestinians rejected it. In fact, and Rabin also understood this, while the representatives of the Palestinian team in Washington were tougher in the negotiations, the Palestinian representatives in Oslo showed great flexibility in the talks (Kurtzer et al., 2013, pp. 40-43). Three days after the resumption of the Washington route, the fourth meeting took place as part of the secret channel in Oslo, during which Qurie proposed adding the city of Jericho to the equation. Thus, in order to prove to the Palestinians that this is not just a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, Qurie proposed that Israel also withdraw from Jericho under the Interim Agreement (Beilin, 1997, p. 98; Pundak, 2013, pp. 191-204; Qurie, 2008a, 110-143).

On May 13, five days after the fifth meeting of the delegations in Oslo, Peres updated Rabin on the negotiations and offered to raise the level of talks. Peres' suggestion was that he himself would travel to Oslo to meet with PLO members. However, Rabin, who

believed that it was forbidden to involve an Israeli political echelon in the talks as long as the Americans boycotted the PLO and Israel did not recognize it, refused and argued that it would be better to send an official echelon to Oslo. In addition, Rabin feared that had there been much progress in the Oslo track, the Palestinians would not participate in the Washington talks. As an alternative, Foreign Minister Peres proposed to send the director general of his office, Uri Savir. Rabin, who agreed to Peres' proposal, conditioned the continuation of the Oslo route on the continuation of the Washington talks, maintaining the secrecy of the Norwegian channel, and not raising the issue of Jerusalem in the talks (Beilin, 1997, pp. 100-101; Gil, 2018, pp. 127-128).

It is difficult to determine why Rabin agreed to raise the level of the talks. On the one hand, he may have been disappointed with the Washington track and thought that in Oslo it would be possible to move forward with the Palestinians. On the other hand, it is not inconceivable that Rabin, who at the beginning did not believe in the Oslo track and thought that there was a slim chance that he would succeed, concentrated more on the Syrian route and thus assumed that it would be better to let Peres to "play" in Norwegian secret track (Pundak, 2013, pp. 218-219).

On May 21, Savir arrived in Oslo and joined the negotiations, in which the Palestinian side reiterated the need for a quick summary of the agreement. Thus, the Palestinian representatives in Oslo hoped that the document would be forwarded to the Americans so that they could submit it to delegations in Washington. After returning to Israel, Savir offered to bring in a legal adviser who would go over the material before the negotiations continued. The man selected for the task was Joel Singer, who had

previously headed the international law department in the IDF (Savir, 1998, pp. 17-41; Beilin, 1997, 102-107; Pundak, 2013, pp. 220-237).

Simultaneously with the Oslo track, Rabin, which between him and Peres was a great suspicion, tried to create his own secret channel with the PLO, when his associate MK Ephraim Sneh met with a senior member of the organization, Nabil Shaath. During May 1993, Sneh told Rabin that the Palestinians should be offered a new outline for an arrangement that would bypass the Washington talks. Sneh, who since 1988 had been Rabin's envoy for secret talks with the Palestinian leadership in the PLO, suggested that had terrorism been stopped for six months, Israel would agree to recognize the Palestinian organization, hold elections in the territories and transfer control of the Gaza Strip to Arafat. Sneh's proposal stipulated that the agreement would be gradual and the PLO's main test would be a decisive action to stop terrorism. (Sneh, 2002, pp. 22-23; Sneh, 2020). On June 6, a day before Sneh and Shaath's planned meeting in London, Rabin ordered Peres to temporarily suspend negotiations in Oslo on the pretext that it was undermining the Washington talks. The next day, the Israeli prime minister sent a formal letter to his foreign minister demanding to halt the talks in Oslo until further notice (Beilin, 1997, 108-110; Gil, 2018, pp. 129-131; Savir, 1998, p. 43). On June 7, Sneh and Shaath met in London. After two days of talks, the two reached an agreed draft with the aim of passing it to Rabin and Arafat for their approval. But when Sneh returned to Israel and reported the talks to Rabin, the latter replied that according to his intelligence sources there was no chance that Arafat would agree to have an alternative channel to the one conducted in Oslo. In addition, Rabin told Sneh that Peres was furious about the existence of the parallel channel with Shaath (Sneh, 2002, pp. 23-24; Sneh, 2020).

Either way, Rabin understood that the Oslo track was the only way to reach an agreement with the Palestinians. On June 10, Peres, Beilin and Singer met with Rabin and explained to him that the Palestinians' positions in Oslo were more moderate than those of the delegation in Washington. In addition, Peres claimed that the secret channel in Oslo had a moderating effect on the official talks in Washington, and that in Oslo it was agreed that the discussion on the issues of the settlements and Jerusalem would take place only in negotiations on a permanent settlement. Consequently, after it was made clear to him that the settlements and security control would remain in Israeli hands, Rabin was convinced and allowed them to continue with the secret track in Oslo (Beilin, 1997, pp. 111-112; Pundak, 2013, pp. 247-249). At this point, Singer joined the Israeli delegation to Oslo and became Rabin's unofficial representative in the talks. In fact, while the entire Israeli negotiating team were Peres' people, Singer was the only person that Rabin, who as mentioned was very suspicious of Peres and his team, really trusted (Sheves, 2020, pp. 655-656; Singer, 2021a).

On June 21, as the secret negotiation between Israel and the PLO continued, an unexpected development started to undermine the stability of Rabin's coalition, as the Israeli Attorney General, Yosef Harish, decided to file an indictment on bribery charges against Shas chairman, Interior Minister Aryeh Deri. Consequently, in light of the legal and public requirements that Deri will be resigned or fired, the Israeli prime minister, who could not expose the negotiation in Oslo, feared that Shas would leave the coalition and join to the right-wing opposition headed by the Likud chairman Benjamin Netanyahu, who denounced any negotiation with the PLO. Thus, Rabin found himself in a political trap as he could not dismiss Deri (Dayan, 1999, pp. 336-

337). In response, Rabin declared that he would not fire Deri. In addition, Rabin even secretly attempted to convince the Attorney General Harish to close the case against Shas' leader. After Harish refused, Rabin started to search for other alternatives such as dismissing the Attorney General and to replace him with a figure who would be more convenient to fulfill his government's agenda (Gilat, 2012, pp. 328-329; Nir, 1999, pp. 408-410). Later in September, after the Israeli High Court of Justice (Bagatz) had ruled that Deri's immunity must be removed, Shas' leader, who would seven years later be convicted and was given a three-year jail sentence, immediately resigned from the government and his party withdrew from Rabin's coalition (Koren & Shapira, 1997, p. 346).

During the months of June-July, the two sides continued to meet secretly in Oslo and held five rounds of talks (Beilin, 1997, pp. 111-119; Pundak, 2013, pp. 250-314; Savir, 1998, pp. 53-72). While the formal talks with the local Palestinian leadership in Washington were not confidential to the Israeli government's members, the Oslo talks were secret and only the Israeli prime minister and its foreign minister knew about this channel. In fact, Rabin did not even update his personal advisors (Yatom, 2009, p. 307), nor the senior command of the IDF, Mossad and Shin Bet (Sagie, 1998, p. 186; Moreh, 2014, p. 110). However, Rabin began sharing with some of his associates in the government about the secret negotiations with the PLO and even sent some of them on his behalf for secret talks with representatives of the organization. In addition to MK Sneh, whose mission had been terminated in early June, Rabin also sent his Minister of Environment Yossi Sarid to meet Shaath in Cairo on July 23 (Bar-Zohar, 2006, pp. 624-625). In July, Rabin dispatched his Housing Minister Benyamin Ben-Eliezer to meet Arafat in Tunis to find out whether the PLO is a real partner for an

agreement with Israel (Henig, 2005, pp. 134-138). Furthermore, he exploited the relationship of Health Minister Haim Ramon with Arafat's adviser Ahmed Tibi in order to advance the negotiations. Ramon and Tibi formulated four questions that were forwarded to Arafat. Rabin's aim was to identify accurately what the Palestinian positions were and whether it was possible to conclude a deal that would fit his basic demands. In essence, Rabin's main demands were as follows: conducting a gradual process with interim agreements; the final status of Jerusalem would only be decided during the permanent status talks; all of the settlements would stay in place during the interim period; the security authority in the occupied territories would be left under Israeli control (Ramon, 2020, pp. 1327-1335; Neriah, 2016, pp. 63-66).

Simultaneously with the negotiations with the Palestinians, both the official in Washington and the secret in Oslo, the Syrian channel continued to be conducted, which was preferred by the Americans who served as mediators. Rabin, who as mentioned was very much debating between the two tracks, had to choose one when he thought that it would not be possible to move forward in both at the same time. In fact, there was covert competition between the Syrian and Palestinian routes (Beilin, 1997, pp. 131-132; Beilin, 2020). But in the summer of 1993, the gap between Israel and Syria seemed to be closing, when on August 3, US Secretary of State Christopher arrived in the region to advance the peace process. At their meeting, Rabin told Christopher that he would prefer to focus on Syria, which would limit him vis-à-vis the Palestinians. In this case, Rabin said, he would agree to a limited move with the Palestinians that would include only the Gaza Strip. But Rabin dropped the bomb when he informed Christopher that Israel would agree to a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for a full peace agreement with Syria. The Israeli prime minister

proposed a gradual retreat in stages alongside full normalization between countries from the first stage, and even suggested to Assad through Christopher to open a direct secret channel. But two days later, Christopher returned with a reply from the Syrian president that did not satisfy the Israeli prime minister. While Rabin demanded a gradual procedure that would last five years, Assad demanded the signing of a permanent agreement under which Israel would withdraw from the Golan Heights within six months. Assad also refused full normalization between the countries and even opposed the opening of a secret channel of talks. Thus, Assad demanded that negotiations between the two countries would continue in Washington through American mediation. Rabin, who was disappointed by Assad's response, was concerned that the Syrians expected Israel to go so far at once. Rabin believed that the issue of normalization of relations required several years of probation, as was the case in the peace agreement signed with Egypt in 1979. Therefore, the Israeli prime minister objected to a situation in which Israel would withdraw at once and be left without real assets as collateral. Moreover, the oppressive situation in Lebanon did not please Rabin when, at the end of July, another round took place between the IDF and Hezbollah as part of Operation Accountability. Hence, since the Syrian option collapsed, Rabin preferred to focus on the Palestinian route and supported the departure of the Israeli delegation to Oslo (Rabinovich, 1998, pp. 138-142; Gil, 2018, pp. 134-136; Ross, 2015, pp. 264-265).

It is worth noting that there is also a claim that a pressure from the Peres camp within the Labor Party, which supported negotiations with the PLO and the Palestinians across the Syrian route, was one of the main reasons why Rabin decided to follow the Oslo route. According to this claim, Rabin feared a situation in which he would be

dismissed by his party and therefore chose to enter into negotiations with Arafat (Raz, 2012, p. 128). In practice, however, not only did Peres and his team work together with Rabin to promote the Oslo Channel, but Rabin's removal was out of the question. During that period, Rabin, as the party's chairman and prime minister, was the Labor's strongest figure, and thus Peres, Rabin's greatest rival in the Labor Party, had no leverage against him at all (Beilin, 2021; Ramon, 2021; Sheves, 2021).

In addition to the collapse of the Syrian route, on August 16 Rabin received Arafat's positive reply to his conditions through the Ramon-Tibi channel. Therefore, he decided that the ripe moment had come to close a deal with the PLO (Neriah, 2016, pp. 63-66; Ramon, 2020, pp. 1327-1335). That day Rabin met with Peres and in fact gave him the green light to close a deal (Pundak, 2013, p. 356). Thus, four days later, on August 20, both sides initialed the agreement in Norway (Gil, 2018, pp. 138-140; Pundak, 2013, pp. 363-367; Beilin, 1997, p. 135; Savir, 1998, p. 78).

Before he would present the agreement to the government, which had the legal authority to accept or decline the agreement, Rabin wanted to secure the Clinton Administration's support for the agreement with the PLO. Thus, on August 25, Rabin had a phone conversation with US Secretary of State Christopher and told him that an important development had occurred in connection with the Palestinian-Israeli track, and requested to send Peres and Singer to brief him. Two Days later, Peres and Singer arrived in California, together with the Norwegian foreign minister Johan Holst who hosted the Oslo talks. In fact, Peres and Holst feared that the Americans might not be supportive of the agreement that had been done without their involvement. Therefore, after Singer had briefed the Americans concerning the accord, Peres

suggested that the United States announce it had drafted a proposed agreement and present it to the two parties for acceptance and then host the signing ceremony. Christopher expressed his support of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, indicated it was a historic event and agreed to host the signing ceremony in Washington. Nonetheless, the US secretary felt it inappropriate for the Americans to claim to have drafted the agreement. Hence, after it became clear that Israel would have to sign the agreement with the PLO in Washington, since Washington has its own requirements regarding contacts with the PLO, especially after the former had suspended its dialog with the latter in 1990, the Americans wanted to confirm that Arafat clearly renounced terror and violence and committed to act against those who engaged in it. Otherwise, the United States would not be able to deal with the PLO, much less invite its representatives to Washington to sign the agreement. Singer, who with Rabin's authorization had already drafted an Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition Agreement, presented the document to Christopher and Ross. After Ross asked to slightly modify the wording of the document to also meet the American requirements, Singer left for Oslo to negotiate with the Palestinians on an official mutual recognition document between Israel and the PLO (Singer, 2021a, 2021b; Ross, 2015, pp. 265-267; Ross, 2004, pp. 114-118; Gil, 2018, pp. 142-143).

Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, the **Securitizing Actor**, performed by Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, received the support of the **Political Audience**, performed by US President Clinton, for the agreement with the PLO. Thus, based on Rabin's political perception that viewed the American support as an indispensable condition for any agreement between Israel and the Arabs, the Clinton Administration's acceptance

gave the political legitimacy that Rabin needed to execute his securitization act, as suggested by this thesis audience conceptualization.

On August 30, after receiving the Clinton Administration's endorsement, Rabin presented the secret agreement in front of his government. It was obvious that the government, which was comprised by eighteen members (13 Labor, 4 Meretz and one from Shas), would support Rabin's policy and indeed the agreement with the PLO was approved by the government with sixteen supporters and two abstainers, including Shas chairman and Interior Minister Deri, who resigned from the government shortly afterwards (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996, p. 85).

After the Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition Agreement was accomplished through an exchange of letters on September 9-10, the Declaration of Principles (DOP) was signed between the Government of Israel and the PLO on September 13 in Washington. According to the accords, the PLO acknowledged the State of Israel and pledged to reject violence, while Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner for negotiations. Furthermore, both sides agreed that the aim of the negotiation was to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, an elected Council, for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on UN Security Council resolution 242 and 338. On the security aspect, both sides concurred that, during the interim period, Israel would control all the security responsibilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including the issues of external security and border crossing (Declaration of Principles, 1993; Singer, 2021a). Both sides agreed that, during the interim period, the status quo of both East

Jerusalem and the Israeli settlements would remain, meaning that East Jerusalem would remain under Israeli control and that the settlements would not be evacuated. Thus, Israel and the PLO agreed that the future of both issues would be discussed during the permanent status negotiation talks (Singer, 2021a; Morris, 2003, p. 578; Said, 1996, p. 9).

On September 23, ten days after signing the DOP in Washington, a special debate was held in the Knesset in order to approve the agreement with the PLO. During the session, PM Rabin urged the Knesset members to support the agreement with the Palestinians and endorse the peace process:

"The government today introduces the Declaration of Principles on the interim arrangements of self-government for the Palestinians in the territories... This government, which took office a year ago, decided to try to put an end to the cycle of wars and terror... We must extricate ourselves from the sense of isolation that has gripped us for nearly fifty years... We must join the journey of peace, reconciliation and international cooperation that is currently rushing across the globe... Unless, we will remain the last and only people in the station... We can lock every door and interrupt any attempt at peace... However, we chose the other way, the one that gives hope... We decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people for negotiations within the framework of the peace talks... We have no intention or desire to hide the truth from the members of the Knesset and the people of Israel. Alongside the great benefits, the expected peace, we also have risks. Our eyes do not ignore the risks, and we will do everything necessary to reduce them to a minimum. However, we believe that the risks are calculated and do not harm the security and existence of the

State of Israel... I call upon all MKs to give us an opportunity to take advantage of this great opportunity (Rabin, 1993b).

Although following Shas' withdrawal, Rabin's coalition comprised only 56 parliament members (Labor 44 and Meretz 12), the agreement with the PLO received the support of the Knesset with 61 supporters (as both Arab Parties voted in favor of the agreement), compared to fifty opponents. Eight Knesset Members (five from Shas and three from Likud) decided to abstain and one MK from Shas was not present during the vote (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996, p. 85). Practically, Shas' abstention in both the government and the parliament's votes stemmed from Deri's political calculations. On the one hand, contemplating that Shas might join the government in the future, Deri did not want to harm his relationship with Rabin. On the other hand, Deri did not want to receive criticism from the right-wing camp for supporting the agreement with the PLO (Dayan, 1999, pp. 339-340).

Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, obtained the support of the government and Knesset, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, to securitize the bi-national state option. Without the support of these two audiences, which had the legal authority to approve an Israeli withdrawal from territory, the Oslo Accords would not have any legal validity and the State of Israel cannot actually execute and implement any agreement. Perceiving the bi-national state option as an existential threat to the State of Israel, Rabin asserted that in order to eliminate this threat, Israel must obtain peace with the Palestinians. Therefore, he suggested the Oslo Accords for providing the Palestinian people an autonomy in the occupied territories of the West Bank and

Gaza Strip, and thus creating a full separation between Israel and the Palestinians. Being the extraordinary measures suggested by Rabin for securitizing the bi-national state option, the Oslo Accords were based on a simple plan. In the first phase, which would last five years, an autonomous Palestinian Authority (PA) would be established in most of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. During this period, when Israelis and Palestinians would realize that coexistence could exist, Israel and the PA were supposed to agree on a permanent solution. The agreement did not guarantee the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, yet all sides were well aware that an autonomous PA was a substantial step toward the creation of a Palestinian state. Consequently, after Rabin had received the support of both the Israeli government and parliament (Legal Audiences) and the Clinton Administration (Political Audience) for the agreement with the PLO (extraordinary measure), the first phase of his securitization policy was accomplished.

The Road to "Gaza-Jericho Agreement"

After the resignation of Shas from the coalition, Rabin was leading a minority government of 56 MKs. Therefore, the Israeli prime minister was dependant on the support of both Arab parties with their five seats, which practically gave him a majority in the Knesset. In fact, Rabin had the opportunity to increase his government, as the ADP Chairmen Abdul Wahab Darausheh, who was a former MK in the Labor, declared that he was willing to join the government and become the first Arab minister in the history of Israel. However, after Rabin had refused the offer, both Arab parties MKs, who supported the agreement with the PLO, had no other possibility besides

preventing the fall of Rabin's government (Koren & Shapira, 1999, pp. 353-354). Given the traditional resistance among the Jewish public to a government that does not have a Jewish majority, the reliance on the Arab parties was not comfortable for Rabin. Thus, as the right-wing opposition criticized him for that reason, the Israeli prime minister had two alternatives besides govern with a minority government.

On the one hand, Rabin could disperse the parliament and go for early elections. However, fearing that he would probably not win the election, he preferred not to execute this move. Moreover, Rabin did not want to endanger the peace process, since the steps that Israel undertook under the agreement with the Palestinians could be delayed or even be cancelled following the election. On the other hand, Rabin could have tried to broaden his coalition. But the possibility to conduct this step was unreasonable, since both the parties Rabin preferred to join into his coalition, Shas and the secular right-wing party, Tzomet, were opposing the peace process with the PLO (Goldstein, 2006, p. 416). Thus, given that Rabin wanted his government to survive by the end of its term scheduled for November 1996, he preferred to govern with a minority government instead of adding uncomfortable partners to the coalition, parties that opposed his policy regarding the Palestinians. In that sense, Rabin declared in January 1994 that he will continue to execute his policy toward a peace process with the Palestinians as long as he has a majority in Knesset (Neria, 2016, p. 274).

The next step after signing the DOP was to reach an agreement with the PLO, in which Gaza Strip and Jericho Area would be transferred to the Palestinians. In parallel to the negotiation between Israel and the PLO, the opponents of the peace process among

the Israeli political arena increased their protest against the upcoming Gaza Jericho Agreement. The settlers' leadership, Likud and other right-wing opposition parties, which rejected the negotiations with the PLO, continued their protest by conducting mass demonstrations, hoping to persuade Israeli public to oppose the peace process with the PLO (Goldstein, 2006, pp. 419-421). However, the opposition leadership perceived that most of the Israeli public rejected the right-wing ideology of "Greater Israel", which recognizes the West Bank and Gaza Strip as an integral part of the Jewish state. Hence, the rejectionist of the Oslo peace amended their strategy by focusing on the security aspect, asserting that the upcoming agreement with the PLO endangers the safety of the Israeli citizens (Sprinzak, 2001, p. 70).

On the Palestinian side, there were also elements who opposed the peace process. For Hamas, the largest Palestinian opposition group to Arafat and Fatah, and also for the Islamic Jihad, any compromise and negotiation with Israel is considered as a betrayal in the Palestinian interest and a heresy in Islam (Gunning, 2007, p. 199; Bartal, 2012, pp. 96-97; Mishal & Sela, 2006, p. 83). Furthermore, Hamas leaders understood that the peace process with Israel completely distanced them from participating in the institutions of the future Palestinian state (Eldar, 2012, p. 70). Therefore, in order to sabotage the peace process, Hamas and Islamic Jihad started to execute terror attacks against Israeli targets, murdering twelve Israelis during October-December 1993. In essence, the Palestinian terror organizations assumed that using violence against Israeli targets would damage the peace process by strengthening the Israeli right-wing camp and reduce the maneuverability and the flexibility of the Israeli government to continue with the process (Morris, 2003, p. 579).

Despite the Palestinian terrorism, which raised doubts among Israelis about the peace process with the Palestinians, Israeli prime minister decided to continue with the negotiation with Arafat and the PLO. However, there were wide gaps between Israel and the PLO due to different approaches regarding how to implement the DOP by both sides, mainly on issues of security and border control that according to the agreement were expected to remain under Israeli control. The breakthrough eventually was reached in February 1994, after the Palestinians had no other choice besides accepting the Israeli security demands. Otherwise, given the lack of compromise regarding the security control among the Israeli side, the Palestinians could not reach any agreement with Israel (Savir, 1998, pp. 119-144; Neriah, 2016, pp. 104-305). Meanwhile, in retaliation to the Palestinian terror attacks, the Israeli security forces were operating against the Palestinian terror organizations. However, after an Israeli settler had conducted a terror attack in the Cave of Patriarch in Hebron on February 1994 and murdered 29 Palestinians, the Palestinian terrorism even deteriorated. Thus, Hamas and Islamic Jihad started to conduct suicide terror attacks, especially inside buses crowded with civilians, murdering fifteen Israelis during April (Steinberg, 2008, pp. 279-280; Chronology, 1994a; Chehab, 2007, pp. 55-56; Hroub, 2006, p. 52). Israel responded directly against the Palestinian terror organizations by arresting hundreds of their activists. Nevertheless, despite the continuation of the Palestinian violence, Rabin decided not to halt to negotiation with Arafat and the PLO (Inbar, 2004, p. 206; Chronology, 1994a).

Following the Hebron Massacre, the pressure on Rabin to broaden its minority government was increased. Consequently, the Israeli prime minister started his endeavors to expand its coalition. At first, Rabin wanted to add Tzomet to his

government. But Labor's main ally in the coalition, the left-wing party Meretz, opposed that move. Meretz also gave Rabin an ultimatum in which it would not take part in the same government with Tzomet. In any case, Rabin had continued his talks with Tzomet chairman, MK Raphael Eitan, but they were not able to reach an agreement, leaving the latter's party outside the government. The Israeli prime minister also considered adding the religious orthodox party, United Tora Judaism (UTJ) into his coalition. Rabin met UTJ's leader, MK Avraham Shapira, who suggested adding thirteen MKs (UTJ 4, NRP 6, and the three MKs who had left Tzomet on February 1994 and established new faction named "Yiud") as a substitute to Meretz's twelve MKs. Thus, together with Shas, this coalition could have a majority in the Knesset (Koren & Shapira, 1999, pp. 349-350).

In practice, the only possibility to increase the coalition without relinquishing Meretz's participation was to join Shas into the government, an option that was Rabin's favored alternative. In that context, Israeli prime minister assumed that UTJ would not join his government, since the party had a long dispute with Shas over the domination within the ultra-Orthodox public. Moreover, Rabin rejected the possibility to establish a unity government with Likud, perceiving the latter's rejection to negotiate with the PLO as an extreme policy. Another possibility for Rabin was adding Yiud into his government. However, Rabin preferred not to irritate Tzomet's leader, MK Raphael Eitan, and alternatively adhered in his attempt to join Shas into his government (Neria, 2016, pp. 352-353). In the end, although Labor and Shas had reached an agreement in April 1994, the latter decided not to join Rabin's government due to disagreements on issues concerning the relationship between religion and state. In this context, before Shas left the government, it had led the legislative initiative prohibiting the

importation of non-kosher meat. After Bagatz overturned the law by stating that it contradicts the Basic Laws of the State of Israel, Rabin tried to find a solution by overriding the Basic Laws and thus finding a compromise with Shas. However, due to the opposition of his main coalition partner Meretz, Rabin efforts failed. Eventually, Rabin's enthusiasm to join Shas into his government decreased, after the latter had decided not to collaborate with the Labor in the "Histadrut" (Israeli General Organization of Workers) elections and alternatively supported Labor's main rival, former Health Minister Haim Ramon, whose party "New Life" eventually beat Labor and won the election on May 1994 (Koren & Shapira, 1999, pp. 350-351).

At the end of April 1994, Israel and the PLO reached the Gaza Jericho Agreement. The accord stipulated that Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area and transfer the responsibility for public order and internal security to the PA, while the IDF would control both for overall security of Israelis in these areas and the borders with Jordan and Egypt. Furthermore, both sides agreed on the establishment of the PA and its security forces, and on the release of 5000 Palestinian prisoners (Gaza-Jericho Agreement, 1994). On May 1, the Israeli government unanimously approved the Gaza-Jericho accord, and thus authorized Rabin to sign the agreement three days later in Cairo (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996, p. 85). On May 10, the agreement was submitted to the Knesset for its approval. During that debate, the Israeli prime minister requested the Knesset members to support the agreement with the PLO and repeated his warnings concerning the bi-national state option as a threat to the existence of Israel as a Jewish state:

"At the end of the Six-Day War, Israel's defense lines were placed along the Suez Canal, the Golan Heights, and along the Jordan River... As part of a military government, we are responsible today for managing the lives of 1.8 million Palestinians who never wanted our control and did everything possible to harm us. For 27 years, we have ruled other people, without serious attempt to solve the problem... All the governments of Israel, both Labor and Likud, have not seen fit over the years to annex the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to the State of Israel... It is no coincidence that the territories were not annexed, even when the supporters of the idea of Greater Israel were at the head of the state. The Labor governments knew at the time and know today that with the annexation of 1.8 Palestinians, the State of Israel would lose its Jewish and democratic character... The agreement gives Israel absolute authority over everything related to responding to foreign threats. Let us not forget that military threats from the outside are the only threats to the existence of the State of Israel... In an attempt to break the cycle of murder, in an attempt to stop the endless campaign of blood and bring security and peace to us and them, we have done something, we have taken the first step we believe and hope will lead us and our Palestinian neighbors to peace and reconciliation" (Rabin, 1994).

After the right-wing opposition in the Knesset had decided not to attend the vote by claiming that most of the Israeli public rejects the agreement with the PLO, the Knesset supported "Gaza-Jericho" agreement with 52 supporters with no opponents (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996, p. 85). Hence, Rabin's securitization policy managed to get through the second stage, creating a partial separation between Israelis and Palestinians. In terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, obtained the support of the government

and Knesset, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, to securitize the bi-national state option.

The Road to "Interim Agreement"

After signing on the Gaza-Jericho accord, the opposition in the Knesset headed by Likud leader, MK Benjamin Netanyahu, increased their protest and criticism regarding the agreement with the PLO. Thus, the opponents claimed that the pact with the PLO did not meet any democratic criteria and hence was unacceptable, defining Arafat's return to Gaza as a disaster to the State of Israel (Goldstein, 2006, pp. 421-422).

Meanwhile, Israel started to implement the agreement with the PLO, transferring the control on the territories to the PA. Moreover, Israel released 4000 Palestinian prisoners as agreed (Chronology, 1994b). Nevertheless, Hamas and Islamic Jihad continued to execute terror attacks against Israelis. In this context, while Rabin's expectation was that the returning of Arafat and the establishment of the PA would decrease the Palestinian terrorism, the reality on the ground was not correlating with the Israeli prime minister's assumption. Thus, the Palestinian violence continued, e.g., in October Hamas executed a suicide terror attack in Tel-Aviv and murdered 23 Israeli civilians (Morris, 2003, pp. 583; Chronology, 1995a). Consequently, Rabin had urged Arafat to disarm Hamas and the rest of the Palestinian terror organizations, but the latter refused to confront them. Moreover, Arafat's remarks that compared the Oslo accords to the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, in which their goal is to eliminate the Jews, also doubted the Israeli side whether the PLO leader is a true partner for peace (Karsh, 2004, pp. 74-75).

Despite the severe terror attacks, the Israeli prime minister decided to continue with the peace process, aiming to expand the Palestinian control on the West Bank (Savir, 1998, p. 176).

In parallel to the negotiation talks with the Palestinians, Rabin continued his efforts to broaden his coalition. In July, two Yihud MKs decided to join the government. In essence, earlier in February 1994, in light of their criticism against the party leader, MK Raphael Eitan, on the background of improper management of the party, three MKs from the right-wing Tzomet had left the party and established the Yihud faction. However, a dispute erupted in Yihud, as one of its members, MK Esther Salmovich, opposed joining Rabin's government. Nevertheless, after the three had withdrawn from Tzomet and were recognized as a faction, Salmovich could not prevent the move and Yihud eventually joined the coalition. In July, Labor and Yihud reached an agreement in which Yihud's leader, MK Gonen Segev, would receive a Minister portfolio, and the second member of the faction, MK Alex Goldfarb, be appointed to a role of a Deputy Minister. However, the Israeli High Court of Justice invalidated the agreement, claiming that according to the Basic Law of the Government, MK who withdrew from its party cannot join the government. Nevertheless, although Segev and Goldfarb were formally not part of the government, they actually supported it until the Basic Law was changed. Eventually, after the basic law had been amended in December 1994, Rabin succeeded to broaden its coalition to 58 MKs, as in January 1995, Yihud formally joined the government (Koren & Shapira, 1997, pp. 354-355).

Furthermore, Rabin's endeavors to add Shas to his coalition continued. Yet Shas leader, MK Aryeh Deri, whose trial on bribery charges was held and legally prevented

him from being appointed as a government member, lacked any political interests that others within his party would take his place. Finally, in February 1995, after Shas voted against the government in the motion of no confidence, Israeli prime minister realized that he could not trust its support. As a result, Rabin decided to appoint two Labor MKs to ministers portfolios (Interior and Religions), which were filled by Shas members before the party left the government (Goldstein, 2006, p. 426). Nevertheless, in order not to entirely close the door for Shas to join the government, Rabin prevented bestowing the Interior Ministry portfolio to its main political rival, secular left-wing party Meretz (Koren & Shapira, 1997, p. 357).

While peace negotiations between the parties continued, the Palestinian terror attacks against Israel did not stop. Thus, in January 1995, the Islamic Jihad executed a suicide terror attack in Beit Lid junction killing 21 Israelis (Morris, 2003, p. 583). Consequently, Rabin decided not to halt the negotiation talks, claiming he would not let the Palestinian terrorism to stop the peace process. Alternatively, the Israeli prime minister used the curfew weapon in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, hoping this would pressure Arafat to act against the Palestinian terrorism (Chronology, 1995b). Rabin had also insisted that unless Arafat significantly acted to eradicate violence, there would be no real progress in the negotiation. Eventually, in early April, after Hamas and Islamic Jihad had murdered ten Israelis in two terror attacks, Arafat started to act. Thus, Arafat ordered for the first time to operate significantly against the two Palestinian terror organizations, during which the Palestinian security forces arrested hundreds operatives from Hamas and Islamic Jihad (Chronology, 1995c). Consequently, convincing that Arafat was making some effort to fight the Palestinian terrorism, Rabin instructed the Israeli negotiation team to present his basic security

positions, according to which Israel would control the external security and borders, settlements and bypass roads on the West Bank (Savir, 1998, p. 200).

In May, during a debate in the Knesset, Rabin reiterated his securitization policy by warning against the bi-national state's alternative:

"We are in the process of resolving the conflict between us and the Palestinians. There are indeed differences of opinions in this house between two worldviews. We believe that the dream of generations of Jews since the destruction of the Second Temple and their prayer to return to Zion are not for the establishment of a bi-national state. The dream of generations of Jews in today's reality is to establish a Jewish state with Jerusalem as its capital... Not a bi-national state but a Palestinian entity on our side... Our goal is to achieve peace with a Palestinian entity in Judea, Samaria and Gaza... We are at the beginning of a process, not an easy process, a process that is accompanied by heavy past burdens of enmity, hatred and bloodshed... Israel makes peace with those who were its enemies... As we did peace with the worst enemy in Israel's wars to this day, with Egypt, we will make peace with those who were enemies and will be partners in building peace in the Middle East" (Rabin, 1995a).

A week later, Rabin's government was on the verge of collapse, as both Arab parties submitted a motion of no confidence in the government on the background of confiscation of 535 Dunam (132 Acre) of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem. The Labor assumed that the right-wing parties would support the expropriation. But Likud, Shas and UTJ decided to support the motion of no confidence in order to overthrow Rabin's government. Consequently, the Arab parties did not withdraw the motion, leaving

Rabin with no other choice besides cancelling the expropriation. Otherwise, his government would have collapsed by the Knesset (Koren & Shapira, 1997, p. 354).

In the meantime, progress had been made on the negotiation, as both sides agreed that the West Bank would be divided into three areas, within each the security control and public responsibilities would split between Israel and the PA (Area A: full Palestinian control; Area B: full Palestinian public control with full Israeli security control; Area C: full Israeli control). Rabin also promised that until mid-1997, Israel would transfer the Palestinians all the areas, which are not of security importance to Israel, but he did not mention what would be the size of the territories (Savir, 1998, p. 219).

However, although the negotiations continued and both sides were on the verge to finalize an agreement, Hamas executed two suicide terror attacks during July-August, murdering nine Israelis (Chronology, 1995d). In order not to allow Palestinian terrorism to dictate the agenda, Rabin ordered to suspend the talks for a week, after which the negotiations were resumed (Savir, 1998, p. 248). Realizing that Arafat was not making enough effort to fight the Palestinian terrorism, Rabin decided that it would be possible to judge Arafat's actions only after the election. In that sense, assuming that it would be difficult for Arafat to fight against Hamas and the rest of the Palestinian terror organizations prior the elections, Rabin believed that the PLO chairman would be able to comply with Israel's demands after receiving a mandate from the Palestinian public (Ya'alon, 2018, pp. 83-84).

In the end of August, both sides agreed that Israel would transfer the PA a territory of 27% (Area A 3% and Area B 24%) of the West Bank (Savir, 1998, pp. 272-275), and that

the status quo in Jerusalem would remain until the permanent status agreement (Chronology, 1996a). Eventually, the Interim Agreement (Oslo II) was signed on September 28. The accord stipulated that Israel would withdraw from the Palestinian cities and villages during October-December 1995, and that all the security and public authorities in those areas would be transferred to the PA. Moreover, both sides agreed that an election for the Palestinian Council and for the chairman role would be held during January-April 1996, and that the permanent status negotiation would start on May 1996, which would be completed no longer than three years (Interim Agreement, 1995).

After the Israeli government unanimously approved the Oslo II agreement (with eighteen supporters with two abstainers), Rabin also needed the support of the Knesset (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996, p. 86). Thus, on October 5, the Knesset assembled to decide whether to support the agreement with the Palestinians. During the session, while asking the Knesset to endorse the accord, Rabin reiterated his warning concerning the bi-national state threat, claiming that unless a full separation from the Palestinians is conducted, the existence of Israel as a Jewish state would be under a significant peril:

"Today, after countless wars and bloody events, we control more than two million Palestinians through the IDF and run their lives through a civilian administration... It is not a solution of peace... We can continue to fight, we can continue to kill and continue to be killed, but we can also try to stop this cycle of endless bloodshed, and we can also give peace a chance... The government has decided to give a chance for peace... This agreement is the continuation of the implementation of the agreements signed

between the Government of Israel and the Palestinians... The two previous agreements and third one that has been laid out today, reflect the current government's policy and its path to advancing peace in the Middle East... We seek a permanent solution to the ongoing bloody conflict between us and the Palestinians and the Arab states. In the framework of the permanent solution, we aspire primarily to establish the State of Israel as a Jewish state, at least eighty percent of its citizens will be Jews... Even before the elections for the present Knesset, we have made it clear to the electorate that we prefer a Jewish state, even not in all parts of the Land of Israel, to a bi-national state that will come into the world if 2.2 million Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are annexed... We had to choose between Greater Israel, which means a bi-national state with a population of 5.4 million Jews and more than three million Palestinians... We have chosen a Jewish state because we are convinced that a bi-national state with millions of Arab Palestinians will not be able to fulfill the universal Jewish destiny of the State of Israel, which is the Jewish state... We call sincerely to all the citizens of the State of Israel, as well as the Palestinian residents, to give the opportunity to establish peace" (Rabin, 1995b).

On October 6, 1995, the Knesset approved the Interim agreement with 61 supporters against 59 opponents (Bar-Siman-Tov, 1996, p. 86). Thus, Rabin successfully completed the third stage of his securitization policy, creating a separation between Israel and the Palestinians. In terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, obtained the support of the government and Knesset, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, to securitize the bi-national state option.

Conclusion

The Oslo Peace Process 1993-1995, which comprised three agreements between the State of Israel and the PLO, is a case study that well illustrates the audience's model during the securitization process suggested in this thesis. The main purpose of Rabin's securitization policy was to struggle against the bi-national state solution, which was perceived by him as a threat to the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. In order to eliminate this menace and ensure a solid Jewish majority within Israel, Rabin suggested creating a separation between Israel and the Palestinians from the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Thus, the Oslo Accords were Rabin's suggested extraordinary measures to create a Palestinian autonomy that eventually had the potential to become a Palestinian state. In Rabin's perspective, if the Palestinian people had their own entity, the threat of the bi-national state option, in which the Jewish population lose its majority to a Muslim Palestinian population, would eventually be eradicated. In order to implement his policy to securitize the bi-national state option, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, had to obtain the approval of two types of audiences.

First, due to Rabin's political perception that viewed the American support as an indispensable condition for any agreement between Israel and the Arabs, the Clinton Administration's acceptance gave the political legitimacy that Rabin needed to execute his securitization act, as suggested by this thesis audience conceptualization. Hence, US President Bill Clinton performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

Second, given the Israeli government and Knesset are the body with the legal authority in Israel to authorize, Rabin needed to obtain their support. Without their approval, the Oslo Accords would not have any legal validity and hence the State of Israel cannot actually execute any agreement with the Palestinians. Thus, as suggested by this thesis audience conceptualization, the Israeli government and Knesset performed the role of the **Legal Audience**.

Chapter 7

Operation "Defensive Shield"

The Securitization of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority

Introduction

Israel's path to Operation Defensive Shield held in March 2002, a military operation that aimed to dismantle the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure, can be viewed from the lenses of Securitization Theory. As described in the previous chapter, the Israeli government led by Yitzhak Rabin started a peace process with the PLO led by Yasser Arafat in order to secure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state. In terms of securitization theory, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, the **Securitizing Actor**, who posed the bi-national state idea as an existential threat to the State of Israel, securitized the one-state solution by signing the Oslo Accords in 1993-1995 with the PLO. These three Israeli-Palestinian pacts, which in terms of securitization theory can be seen as extraordinary measures, created a de-facto separation between Israel and the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, securing Israel with a solid Jewish majority of roughly 80%.

Practically, the Oslo Accords were the preliminary stage on the way to a permanent agreement with the Palestinians, one which was supposed to fulfill the vision of the Two State Solution, in which an independent Palestinian state would be established, living in peace alongside the State of Israel. However, the failed attempts of Israeli

Prime Minister Ehud Barak and his government during 2000-2001 to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, and the outbreak of Second Palestinian Intifada after the failure of the Camp David Summit, led the Israeli leadership to gradually securitize Arafat and Palestinian Authority (PA), a process which its heyday manifested through the Israeli decision to launch Operation Defensive Shield in March 2002. Thus, after Palestinian terrorism hit Israeli cities, the Israeli government led by Ariel Sharon decided to launch Operation Defensive Shield, which aimed to take over all Palestinian cities in the West Bank and neutralize all terrorist nests there.

In terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the military echelon both performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, perceiving Arafat and the PA as a security threat to the State of Israel. Both Sharon and the military echelon opted to securitize Arafat and the PA, implementing a wide military campaign against the Palestinian terrorism. Yet, although Israel could have acted without the American support, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon perceived the backing of the Bush Administration, or at least its lack of resistance, as an essential condition for conducting such an extraordinary measure. Hence, Sharon tried to convince US President George W. Bush that Arafat and the PA are not partners for peace with Israel but are waging a terrorist campaign against the Jewish state. In securitization terms, since Sharon perceived the American President's support as essential for conducting a securitization act, the latter performed the role of the **Political Audience**. In addition, Sharon had to obtain the approval of the Israeli cabinet. In terms of Securitization Theory, since according to the Israeli law, the cabinet is the body with the legal authority to authorize such a military strike, it performed the role of the **Legal Audience** that needed to be persuaded for executing a securitization act. Eventually,

after the cabinet granted its approval to Operation Defensive Shield, the IDF started its wide campaign to dismantle the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure.

Figure 4: The Dimensions during Israel's Securitization in Operation "Defensive Shield"

<i>Securitization Dimension</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Legal</i>
<i>Securitizing Actor</i>	Israeli Prime Minister	Israeli PM and IDF
<i>Audience</i>	American Administration	Israeli Government

In essence, this chapter reviews the chain of events from the signing of the Oslo II agreement in September 1995 until the Israeli decision to launch Operation Defensive Shield in March 2002. Thus, this chapter aims to introduce the historical background of how the State of Israel failed in its efforts to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, indicating how the Israeli leadership began to doubt whether the PA under Arafat's leadership was indeed a partner for peace. In addition, this chapter also illustrates how the Israeli leadership, which identified the PA under Arafat as perpetrator of terror and violence, begun to securitize Arafat and the PA as a security threat, a process that its culmination was the Sharon government decision to launch a military strike against Arafat and the Palestinian Authority's terror infrastructure.

Rabin is assassinated. Peres implements the Oslo Accords

As described in the previous chapter, the signing of the Oslo II Agreement in September 1995 was the heyday of the securitization process carried out by the State of Israel under the Rabin government, which was intended to secure Israel's future as

a Jewish and democratic state. Following the Oslo Accords, a separation was effectively created between Israel and the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who have become citizens of the PA. Although this was not the final stage of the Oslo peace process, which was supposed to end with the signing of a permanent peace agreement between Israel and Palestine, the PA has already become a de facto state, as it exercised civilian and security control over all Palestinian population centers in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Grievously, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has never had the opportunity to witness how the agreement with the PLO was implemented. On November 4, 1995, at the end of a peace rally held in Tel Aviv, Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist who opposed the Oslo Accords (Chronology, 1996a). Rabin's successor, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, vowed to continue Rabin's policy. Thus, by the end of December 1995, the new Israeli government led by Peres, which was identical in its composition to the Rabin government, implemented the Interim Agreement signed with the PLO, transferring the security and civilian control over most of the Palestinian population centers to the PA. Consequently, in addition to the Gaza Strip and the Jericho enclave that had already been transferred to the PA's control in mid-1994, by the end of 1995 the Palestinians also controlled the cities of Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, Nablus and Ramallah, and over more than 400 Palestinian villages (Chronology, 1996b). On January 20, 1996, Palestinian elections were held for the first time, both for the position of the PA's Chairman and for the Palestinian Parliament, in which Arafat and Fatah won an impressive victory (Savir, 1998, p. 327). The Islamic organizations, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who constituted an opposition to Arafat and Fatah and opposed the Oslo peace process, chose to refrain from participating in the

elections in order not to provide legitimacy and recognition to the agreements with Israel (Milshtein, 2004, pp. 54-55; Hroub, 2006, p. 130).

Although the Israeli Palestinian peace process seemed to be moving in a positive direction, the Palestinian terrorism returned to be a hampering factor. On February 25, Hamas carried out two suicide terror attacks in Jerusalem and Ashkelon and murdered 25 Israelis. A week later, on March 3, Hamas executed another suicide terror attack in Jerusalem and murdered 19 Israelis. The next day, March 4, it was the Islamic Jihad organization that conducted a suicide attack in Tel Aviv that left 15 Israelis dead (Chronology, 1996c). Hamas officials claimed that the attacks came in retaliation for the Israeli assassination of its military wing's leader, Yahya Ayyash, in January 5, 1996 (Eldar, 2005, p. 206; Hroub, 2006, p. 54; Chehab, 2007, p. 64). However, Hamas also carried out the attacks in order to thwart the Oslo Accords and embarrass Arafat and the PA (Eldar, 2012, pp. 81-83; Savir, 1998, p. 331).

These nefarious terror attacks substantially affected the Israeli public, which was expected to vote in the May 1996 elections to decide whether Prime Minister Shimon Peres would continue in office, or alternatively it would be the opposition leader, Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu, who in his part opposed the continuation of the Oslo process in its current form. Opinion polls in Israel have clearly indicated that while before the terror attacks Peres led safely over Netanyahu, the support for the latter significantly increased following the attacks and the gap between the two candidates was closing (Arian and Shamir, 1999, p. 19; Savir, 1998, p. 320). Arafat, who feared that the IDF would enter the Palestinian territories in order to act against Hamas, a scenario that could even lead to the end of the peace process with Israel and the

expulsion of the PLO leadership from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, realized that he had no other choice but to crack down the Palestinian terrorist organizations. Hence, Arafat ordered the PA security forces to launch a decisive campaign against Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which included the vast arrests and closures of mosques and institutions related to both organizations (Eldar, 2012, pp. 81-83).

Despite the Palestinian terrorism, Israeli Prime Minister Peres believed that the peace negotiations with the Palestinians should continue. Hence, following talks between the two sides during March-April 1996, Arafat and Peres approved a detailed document on cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces in the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, it was agreed between the two leaders that the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, the last Palestinian city that has not yet transferred to the PA and was also inhabited by 800 Jewish settlers, would be postponed to mid-June after the Israeli elections (Savir, 1998, p. 333). In fact, each of the parties had an interest in postponing the withdrawal from Hebron. On the Israeli side, Peres feared that a confrontation with the settlers following the IDF's withdrawal from Hebron, as required according to the Interim Agreement signed in September 1995, could play into Netanyahu's hands in the upcoming elections (Eldar and Zertal, 2004, p. 214). On the Palestinian side of the equation, Arafat, who opted for the victory of Peres, agreed to the latter's request to postpone the withdrawal from Hebron until after the Israeli elections (Qurie, 2008b, p. 13). At this stage, despite the continuation of Palestinian terrorism, which was indeed perceived as a security threat, the Israeli leadership did not pose Arafat and the PA as a security threat to the State of Israel. On the contrary, the Peres government viewed the PA led by Arafat as a partner for peace.

In terms of Securitization Theory, the Israeli leadership under Prime Minister Shimon Peres did not pursue to securitize Arafat and the PA at that time. In fact, the Israeli political echelon perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace with Israel. Thus, the Peres government wished to continue with its current securitization policy, which has been conducted through the Oslo peace process, in order to secure the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. In addition, acknowledging Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which executed terror attacks in Israel, as a security threat to Israeli citizens, the Peres government believed that Arafat and the PA were its partners in the fight against the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

Netanyahu wins Elections. The Oslo Process is delayed

On May 29, 1996, the elections for Prime Minister and the Knesset were held in Israel. The election results were a severe political blow to supporters of the Oslo process. In the prime ministerial elections, Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu defeated the Prime Minister and Labor Party Chairman Shimon Peres by a narrow margin of 1%, 50.5% vs. 49.5%. In the Knesset elections, the right-wing bloc won a majority, a figure that helped the elected Prime Minister Netanyahu to form a right-wing government with a coalition majority of 66 MKs (Arian and Shamir, 1999, p. 12). In fact, the new Israeli government was composed mainly of opponents of the Oslo process, parties that sat on the opposition benches during the period of the Rabin and Peres governments.

In essence, Netanyahu conveyed a clear message against the Oslo Accords with Arafat and the PLO. Already as the leader of the opposition in 1993-1996, Netanyahu

asserted that the Oslo Accords constituted a security threat to the State of Israel, indicating that they would lead to an Israeli withdrawal to 1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state. For the Palestinians, Netanyahu argued, the Oslo accords are part of the PLO's "Phased Plan" adopted in 1974, according to which all the territories of Palestine will be liberated in stages, from the sea to the river.

"You do not have to be a prophet to see in advance what will happen in this region after the establishment of a Palestinian state. It will be a small country, but it will not remain small. It will collapse Jordan. The Jordanian government knows very well that it will not last. Arafat will swallow Jordan and digest its army. When he has a state, he will arm his army. When he has a state he can bring his army what he wants, and he can make alliances with whom he wants - alliances with Iraq, alliances with his other allies in Iran" (Netanyahu, 1993).

On October 5, 1995, during the session in which the Knesset approved the Oslo II with the PLO by a narrow majority of 61 to 59, Netanyahu warned against it:

"The left-wing government is today establishing a Palestinian state, which will gradually spread to all of Judea and Samaria until the dangerous 1967 lines, and within these borders will stand an army of tens of thousands of well-equipped soldiers... This is the essence of the Oslo Accords... Not a strong Jewish state that extends to most of the breadth of Israel, but a tiny, threatened, narrow land, on a negligible part across Israel, a country whose citizens' security depends on Arafat's grace" (Netanyahu, 1995).

In his remarks, Netanyahu claimed that Arafat and the PLO were not partners for peace with Israel, but instead posed a security threat to Israeli citizens:

"And what did you get in return for those far-reaching concessions you made so far? Two years ago you promised us a new Middle East, "Let the sun rise" you said, a new era of peace and reconciliation, of personal security for every citizen. And we received increasing terrorism, buses exploding everywhere in the country, anxious parents. I am saying this with sorrow and pain, because since the establishment of the state of Israel there has been no period, there have not been two years since the establishment of Israel in which personal security has deteriorated to such a poor level. And Gaza and Jericho have become exactly as we said - and I say this again with regret - just as we said, Gaza and Jericho have become cities of refuge for terrorists. And do not tell us that it is only Hamas and Islamic Jihad that are responsible for terrorism. Whoever refuses to extradite Jewish murderers, whoever continues to call on jihad - "until the last Palestinian child" - whoever does not even try to disarm "Hamas", whoever sells you for the thousandth time the promise to repeal the Palestinian Convention - is a senior partner for terrorism and a senior partner for political fraud" (Netanyahu, 1995).

Netanyahu, who continues to criticize Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's policy, claimed in his speech that handing over territories to Arafat and the PLO poses a security threat to the State of Israel:

"And here lies before us the Oslo II agreement... What emerges from it is not your intention to establish a Jewish state, but to jeopardize the one that already exists; not to be separated from the Arabs living in Judea and Samaria, but to relinquish the security that the areas of Judea and Samaria give us. You abandoned Greater Israel in favor of a tiny, dwarfed and shrunken state whose security depends on your friend Arafat... You are creating an immediate threat, a terrorist threat, a strategic threat,

and a threat to the very existence of the state... You are endangering the security of the State of Israel and its citizens" (Netanyahu, 1995).

As noted in the last chapter, despite Netanyahu's claims that the agreement poses a security threat to the State of Israel, the Knesset approved the Interim Agreement. According to the agreement, Israel handed over most of the Palestinian population centers to the control of Arafat the PA. In terms of Securitization Theory, Netanyahu, performing the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, asserted that the Oslo Accords posed a security threat to the State of Israel. Netanyahu urged the Knesset, which had the authority to approve the accord and thus performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, not to support the pact with the Palestinians. Eventually, Netanyahu's securitization attempt failed as the "Interim Agreement" with the PLO was approved by the Knesset and was implemented by the State of Israel.

Although he perceived that the Oslo Accords were a security threat to the State of Israel (Peri, 2006, pp. 77-78), Netanyahu understood that he was obligated to abide by the agreements signed by the Rabin government, otherwise the State of Israel might face international criticism and be portrayed as trying to thwart any reconciliation with the Palestinians (Naveh, 1999, p. 47). Nevertheless, the new Israeli prime minister was interested in making changes in the Oslo accords. In addition, Netanyahu insisted that before Israel would transfer additional territories to the Palestinians, the latter must fulfill their commitments in full, especially to fight against the Palestinian terror organizations (Rabinovich, 2012, p. 91; Karsh, 2004, p. 166).

At the beginning of Netanyahu's tenure, the question of the city of Hebron was on the table. According to the agreement between the PLO and the Peres government, Israel

was obliged to withdraw from most of the city territories and transfer it over to the PA by mid-June 1996. Despite the signed agreement between Israel and the PLO, Netanyahu opted to alter the pact (Naveh, 1999, p. 47). In early September 1996, Netanyahu offered Arafat a new outline for the deployment of the IDF in Hebron, which in fact increased the PA's jurisdiction in the city. However, Arafat refused the offer, demanding that the Israeli withdrawal be carried out in accordance with an agreement signed with the Peres government (Chronology, 1997). The PA chairman, who called on Netanyahu to implement the signed agreements and move forward in the peace process, threatened that the Palestinians would have no choice but to return to the armed struggle against Israel (Karsh, 2004, p. 170). Arafat's opportunity to use violence in order to pressure Netanyahu to return to the negotiating table came at the end of September 1996, when the latter decided to approve the opening of a new entrance to the Western Wall Tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem. On September 25, a day after the tunnel was opened, riots encouraged by the Arafat and the Palestinian leadership broke out throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In escalating the violence, the PA called on the Palestinians to defend the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. After three days of violence, during which an exchange of fire between the PA security forces and the IDF occurred for the first time since the beginning of the Oslo peace process, 15 Israelis and 58 Palestinians were killed (Karsh, 2004, pp. 172-174; Naveh, 1999, pp. 35-36; Ayalon, 2020, pp. 147-151). Eventually, the crisis was resolved after the intervention of the Clinton Administration. Thus, on October 1, Netanyahu and Arafat met in Washington and agreed to launch accelerated negotiations in order to reach an agreement on the city of Hebron (Chronology, 1997).

Palestinian violence following the opening of the Western Wall Tunnel has led to a perceptual change among Israeli decision-makers regarding Arafat and the PA. Until then, decision-makers in Israel believed that the Palestinian terror organizations, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, were the source the terror campaigns against Israel. However, the Palestinian violence erupted in late September 1996, in which an exchange of fire was recorded for the first time between IDF and PA forces, led to the recognition that Arafat and the PA may not necessarily be partners for peace (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 55-56). In this context, on October 7, 1996, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a Knesset session and blamed the outbreak of violence on PA Chairman Arafat, claiming that the Palestinians were trying to force the Israeli government to make concessions through terrorism. In addition, Netanyahu asserted that the Oslo Accords did not provide security for the State of Israel:

"The acute and immediate problem we face today is that the fundamental assumption underlying the Oslo Accords has been undermined, as we have warned. The Palestinian force, which was supposed to provide security on the Palestinian side, failed twice: First, he failed for two and a half years in not turning his guns against terrorist organizations in the PA; and now he has failed in turning his guns against us... if the PA is indeed committed to a solution of peace, of negotiations at the negotiating table, it must completely rule out the option of incitement, violence and war" (Netanyahu, 1996).

Despite the tense atmosphere following the events of the Western Wall Tunnel, Prime Minister Netanyahu chose to continue the peace process with the Palestinians. On January 17, 1997, with the assistance of American government's mediation, Israel and

the PLO signed the Hebron Protocol, in which Israel transferred most of the city to the PA (Naveh, 1999, p. 57; Hebron Protocol, 1997). In addition, the two sides reached an agreement on the date of the three Israeli redeployments in the West Bank. According to the Oslo II agreement signed between the Rabin government and the PA in September 1995, Israel undertook to transfer territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. The accord stipulated that the delivery of the land would be carried out gradually in three stages/redeployments at six-month intervals. Thus, the process was supposed to be completed within eighteen months by September 1997. In practice, until the beginning of 1996, Israel transferred almost the entire Gaza Strip and 27% of the West Bank's territory to the Palestinians. At that stage, the Netanyahu government was obliged under the agreement to execute three further redeployments. The Palestinian side expected that at any redeployment, Israel would transfer 20% of the West Bank to the PA. Thus, according to Palestinian aspiration, by the end of the three phases, the PA will control 87% of the West Bank. On the other hand, Netanyahu tried to postpone the date on which Israel would complete those three redeployments. Eventually, with the assistance of the American mediation, it was agreed that the third redeployment would be completed by August 1998 (Naveh, 1999, pp. 54-56).

On March 6, Netanyahu's government decided that in the first phase of redeployment, Israel would transfer an additional 2% of the West Bank territory to the Palestinians. The Palestinians, who expected to receive more land, rejected the Israeli proposal (Naveh, 1999, pp. 63-64). This controversy led to a stalemate in the peace process, which the Clinton administration tried to solve to no avail. The debate between Israel and the Palestinians was mainly about the size of the territory that Israel would

transfer to the Palestinians (Ross, 2015, p. 281-283). Meanwhile, Hamas continued to carry out suicide terror attacks in Israel: on March 12 in Tel Aviv that left three Israelis dead; on July 30 in Jerusalem where 15 Israelis were killed; and on September 4 in Jerusalem murdering four Israelis. In response, Netanyahu made it clear to Arafat that there would be no progress in the peace process until the PA curbed the Palestinian terrorist organizations (Naveh, 1999, pp. 72-79).

The Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai clarified Netanyahu government's policy in a speech to the Knesset on August 5, stating that Israel would not hand over additional territories to the Palestinians as long as Arafat and the PA do not act against the Palestinian terrorism:

"We do not want and are not looking for the collapse of the PA, as some people claim. But we strongly urge the PA to act as required. The basis of any agreement is the fight against terrorism, infrastructure, instigators and those who create the conditions for terrorist attacks. The PA cannot be released for a moment from its basic commitment to act against terrorism. When the leadership of the PA will decide to stop terrorism, stop adopting directly or indirectly the perpetrators of terrorism, fight those who only want to act in the way of terrorism and act against the infrastructure, they will find us advancing with them in agreements and arrangements that will not harm our national security, and will enable a series of future pacts that will advance us to establish a relationship and a system of agreements between us and the Palestinians" (Mordechai, 1997).

The impasse in the negotiations between the parties regarding the second Israeli redeployment continued during 1998. It was only in October 1998, after extensive

mediation efforts by the Clinton Administration, that Netanyahu and Arafat reached an agreement on that matter (Ross, 2015, pp. 283-286; Albright, 2013, pp. 308-320). As part of the Wye River Memorandum, signed between Israel and the PLO on October 23, the former undertook to transfer 13% of the West Bank territories to the PA. In addition, Israel agreed to release 750 Palestinian prisoners. The PA, on the other hand, pledged to carry out their security plan to fight Palestinian terrorist organizations, to collect illegal weapons, and to prevent incitement to violence against Israel. Moreover, it was agreed that the permanent settlement negotiations would be resumed as soon as possible with a view to concluding them by May 1999 (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998).

The Wye River Memorandum was heavily criticized by Israeli right-wing parties, which undermined the stability of Netanyahu's government. Therefore, fearing that his government would collapse, Netanyahu preferred at this stage to delay the implementation of the signed pact. In practice, Netanyahu partially implemented the agreement, as on November 20, Israel transferred 2% of the land, and released 250 Palestinian prisoners. Eventually, after he had failed to establish a unity government with the Labor Party, Netanyahu realized that his government was about to fall in a no-confidence vote. Hence, the Israeli prime minister supported a proposal to dissolve the Knesset and hold an early election. Netanyahu, who understood that in order to win the elections in May 1999, he must not lose the support of the right-wing voters who opposed the Oslo Accords, decided not to fully implement the Wye Memorandum (Naveh, 1999, p. 206-209; Caspit, 2017, pp. 171-172).

In terms of Securitization Theory, the Israeli leadership under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not securitize Arafat and the PA. Although opposing the Oslo Accords and criticizing Arafat and the PA for their incompetence in dealing with the Palestinian terrorist organizations, Prime Minister Netanyahu and his government continued the peace process with Palestinians. Moreover, despite a delay in the original time table of the Oslo Accords, the Netanyahu government reached two agreements with the PLO, in which the city of Hebron and other territories in the West Bank were handed over to the Palestinians.

Barak wins Elections. The Peace Process resumes

The Israeli elections held on May 17, 1999, ended with a major victory for supporters of the peace process with the Palestinians. The candidate of the center-left bloc, Labor Chairman Ehud Barak, defeated Prime Minister Netanyahu, 56% vs 44% respectively, and became the new Israeli prime minister. Yet, despite the significant achievement in the prime ministerial election, the Knesset elections outcome showed that the center-left bloc failed to obtain a majority of 61 Knesset members. Barak, who pursued to continue the peace process with the Palestinians, had no other choice but to form a coalition with some right-wing parties. Thus, in addition to the center-left bloc parties, Labor (26 MKs), Meretz (10), and the Centre Party (6), the Barak government also comprised Shas (17), Yisrael BaAaliya (6), Mafdal (5) and United Torah Judaism (5), which were part of the right-wing bloc and opposed the Oslo Accords (Barak, 2018, pp. 326-328).

In spite of his support for the continuation of the peace process with the PLO, the working assumption of the new Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was that had Israel continued to hand over territories to the Palestinians, it could remain without bargaining chips for the final stage of the negotiations in which both parties will discuss the permanent agreement (Barak, 2021a; Barak, 2018, p. 343; Sher, 2001, p. 20). In order to avoid this problematic scenario, Barak concluded that it would be wiser to skip the talks about the third Israeli redeployment, and alternatively start negotiations on a permanent agreement. Thus, Barak thought that he would be able to verify if the Palestinians were partners for peace, or whether Arafat was only interested in receiving additional territories from Israel without giving anything in return (Barak, 2021a ; Edelist, 2003, pp. 74-75).

At the beginning of Barak's tenure, it seemed that the peace process with the Palestinians was moving in a positive direction. On September 4, following negotiations between the parties, Israel and the PLO signed the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, which was in fact an improved version of the Wye River Memorandum that the Netanyahu government did not fully implement (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999). Despite the opposition of the right-wing parties Yisrael BaAliyah and Mafdal, which were part of Barak's government, the agreement was approved by a large majority both in the government and in the Knesset (Sher, 2001, pp. 57-58). Thus, following the implementation of the agreement, the Palestinians controlled over 40% of the West Bank.

After reaching a renewed agreement with the PLO on the implementation of the Wye Memorandum, Barak preferred to concentrate his efforts to reach a peace deal with

Syria. In fact, the Israeli prime minister gave greater importance to negotiations with Syria than the Palestinian track. Assuming that a breakthrough with the Syrian President Hafez al-Assad would delay any progress in the negotiations with the Palestinians, Barak estimated that an agreement with Damascus would lead to a decline in Palestinian demands at the negotiation table (Barak, 2018, pp. 328-329; Ben-Ami, 2004, p. 22). Nevertheless, although there were high hopes that the negotiations between Israel and Syria would yield a historic agreement, the peace process reached an impasse at the end of March 2000 (Ross, 2015, pp. 289-291; Drucker, 2002, pp. 107-108).

Failing to reach an agreement with Syria, Barak was ready to focus entirely on the Palestinian track. In fact, Barak was so determined to reach a peace deal with the Palestinians, that even the violent events that erupted on May 15 during the Palestinian Nakba Day did not change his mind. However, similar to the Palestinian violence that erupted after the opening of the Western Wall Tunnel in September 1996 during the Netanyahu government, the May 2000 events were also manifested by an exchange of gunfire between the PA security forces and the IDF (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 60-61). In order not to escalate the situation, Barak ordered the IDF to respond moderately to the Palestinian violence (Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 49). Yet, although he did not think that Arafat had initiated the violence, Barak had no doubt that the PA chairman did nothing to stop it (Barak, 2018, pp. 343-344). At a press conference following the events of the Nakba Day, Barak hinted that Arafat and the PA encouraged the violence:

"The other side must also do everything to calm the atmosphere. I am not sure that they did everything to prevent the riots today" (Walla, 2000).

In terms of Securitization Theory, Barak did not pursue to securitize Arafat and the PA. On the contrary, Barak wished to continue the peace process in order to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. However, it seems that the violent incidents during the Nakba Day were the beginning of a turning point for the Israeli prime minister, who publicly pondered the question of whether Arafat and the PA are committed to the path of peace.

On May 24, less than two weeks after the Nakba Day, the IDF withdrew its forces from Southern Lebanon, ending a period of eighteen years in the country (Barak, 2018, pp. 344-346). Previously, the Israeli leadership hoped that the withdrawal from Lebanon would take place as part of a peace agreement with Syria. Jerusalem hoped that Damascus would restrain the Lebanese Shiite terror organization Hezbollah from attacking Israel, and thus ensure peace on the border between Israel and Lebanon. However, after the Syrian track had collapsed, the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon was carried out unilaterally (Drucker, 2002, pp. 129-135). In retrospect, the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon enormously affected the Palestinians, who found it difficult to understand why the Israelis decided to escape Southern Lebanon without any agreement, while in the West Bank they quarreled with the Palestinians over every inch of land. Thus, it is not inconceivable that the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon demonstrated the Palestinians that the only way for them to liberate their land from Israel goes through an armed struggle and not through the negotiation table

(Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 64-65; Karsh, 2004, p. 209; Drucker 2002, pp. 136-137).

Following completing the withdrawal from Lebanon, Barak decided that the time had come to examine whether a political breakthrough could be achieved with the Palestinians. Hence, in early June, Barak urged US President Clinton to hold a summit at which both sides would discuss the whole core issue in order to reach a permanent agreement. In this way, Barak believed, it would be possible to know whether Arafat is a real partner for peace with Israel (Barak, 2018, pp. 347-348; Ross, 2015, p. 291; Drucker, 2002, pp. 230-232). While Barak was determined to hold a summit, the Palestinian side opposed the idea, arguing that the gap between the parties was too wide and that time was not ripe for that kind of conference. However, after a persuasion campaign by the Americans, Arafat agreed to participate in the summit, which was scheduled to be held in Camp David, Maryland (Qurie, 2008b, pp. 161-162; Drucker, 2002, p. 237).

Barak's decision to attend the Camp David Summit led his right-wing coalition partners, Shas, Yisrael BaAliyah and Mafdal, to resign from the government. Consequently, Barak traveled to the historic peace summit with the Palestinians when he headed a minority government (Barak, 2018, p. 353; Drucker, 2002, pp. 179-181). On July 11, the Camp David Conference began. During two weeks of marathon negotiations, both sides discussed all the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict- borders, security, Jerusalem, and refugees. Yet on July 25, despite high expectations, the summit ended in failure. Barak did offer Arafat through US President Clinton a proposal that included the establishment of a Palestinian state over 92% of the West

Bank and the entire Gaza Strip, limited absorption of refugees on a humanitarian basis of family reunification, and Palestinian sovereignty over the Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem including the Muslim and Christian districts of the Old City. However, Arafat rejected the proposal and demanded that, with the exception of the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall, all of East Jerusalem would be under a Palestinian sovereignty (Ben-Ami, 2004, p. 187; Karsh, 2004, p. 187; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 68-70).

The failed outcome of the Camp David Summit constituted a severe blow to the Israeli Palestinian peace process. For the first time since the beginning of the Oslo track, it turned out that an Israeli Palestinian reconciliation agreement is not on the horizon, as both sides failed to bridge the gap on the core issues of the conflict. For Barak, the disappointment was twofold. First, he took a significant political risk by going to the conference, during which he exposed his positions on the core issues. Second, while the Israeli side demonstrated flexibility in the negotiations, the Palestinian side was not willing to compromise during the talks (Yatom, 2009, p. 424). Thus, after returning from Camp David, Barak stated on July 31 that despite his desire to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, he could not find a partner for peace on the Palestinian side:

"Three weeks ago, I left at the head of the Israeli delegation to Camp David. Like my predecessor in the struggle for peace - Menachem Begin, his memory for blessing, Yitzhak Rabin, his memory for blessing - I set out on a peace mission knowing the heartbreaking price that might be required, but also the chance to end the conflict, the chance to sit safely with the Palestinian people as good neighbors... Unfortunately, we did not find the other side willing to make brave, difficult and painful decisions. We will

continue to act and seek a path to peace. We know there is a price for peace, but we are not ready for peace at any cost" (Barak, 2000).

In terms of Securitization Theory, Barak did not pursue to securitize Arafat and the PA at that time. Nevertheless, it seems that the Palestinian refusal to the Israeli offer in Camp David elevated the Israeli skepticism concerning Arafat's desire to reach peace with Israel. Thus, similar to what he had indicated after the violent events during Nakba Day in May, Barak publicly stated, and this time explicitly, that Arafat and the PA are probably not partners for peace with Israel.

Despite the failure of the Camp David Summit, Barak sought to continue the peace process with the Palestinians. Given that the gap of position between both sides was too wide, the Israeli prime minister was confident that only an American mediation proposal could lead to a breakthrough in negotiations. Thus, in order to bridge the gap, the Israeli and the Palestinian delegations met under the auspices of the US administration, which in turn was expected to lay a mediation proposal in early October (Ben-Ami, 2004, pp. 279-286; Sher, 2001, p. 286; Ross, 2015, p. 294; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 76).

Meanwhile, on September 28, the head of the opposition, Likud Chairman Ariel Sharon, visited the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif complex in the Old City of Jerusalem. Sharon, who opposed the concessions Barak had suggested regarding the Israeli capital during the negotiations in Camp David, wanted to be portrayed by the Israeli public as the leader who would keep the city united under Israeli sovereignty (Dan, 2007, pp. 251-255; Hefez and Bloom, 2005, p. 548; Sharon, 2011, p. 324). The PA leadership was very concerned about Sharon's planned visit, fearing that it could

have ignited riots among the Palestinian street. Yet, despite requests from the Palestinians not to allow Sharon to visit the site, Barak gave its confirmation on the grounds that he could not legally prevent the opposition leader from visiting the Temple Mount (Qurie, 2015, pp. 11-12; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 15-16). Eventually, Sharon's visit passed relatively quietly and without any casualties (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 548-550; Bregman, 2005, p. 127). Yet the next day, on September 29, after Friday prayers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Palestinians mob began attacking Jewish worshipers with stones and Molotov cocktails. In retaliation, Israeli security forces broke into the Temple Mount compound. At the end of the riots, seven Palestinian rioters were dead. This was the opening act of the Second Palestinian Intifada (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 18-19; Ben-Ami, 2004, p. 292; Bregman, 2005, p. 127).

The Palestinian Intifada erupts

The Second Palestinian Intifada was a significant turning point in terms of how Arafat and the PA were perceived by the Israeli decision-makers. Sharon's visit, which as mentioned above, passed relatively quietly, was not the reason for the outbreak of the Palestinian violence. It would be more accurate to argue that the clashes erupted the next day led by Fatah Tanzim activists, members of Arafat's party, constituted the spark that was needed to ignite the great arson. One thing that is undisputed is that PA Chairman Arafat encouraged Fatah members to escalate the clashes and did nothing to curb the violence (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 27). Arafat seems to have taken advantage of the violence, using it to distract the Palestinian street and its

armed militias, who were outraged by the continued Israeli occupation on the one hand, and from the corrupt rule of the PA on the other hand. In addition, the intifada served as a lifeline for Arafat, who was labeled by the international community as the culprit for the failure of the Camp David Conference. Consequently, the Palestinian uprising helped Arafat and the PA to release themselves from their political distress and restore their status among both the Palestinian public and the international arena (Ben-Ami, 2004, pp. 296-302; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 88-89).

Following the Friday violent events in Jerusalem, riots erupted throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip the next day. Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails, and in some cases, even shot at the Israeli security forces (Drucker, 2002, p. 298). Although there were voices among the PA leadership, such as Mahmud Abbas and Ahmed Qurie, who called on Arafat to stop the violence, the latter chose not to intervene, a decision that actually gave legitimacy to the continuation of the intifada. Thus, Fatah Tanzim militants, with the help of PA security forces personnel, continued to carry out shooting attacks on Israeli targets (Qurie, 2015, pp. 21-26; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 25-35). Furthermore, the PA began releasing Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives from Palestinian prisons, who soon joined the cycle of violence (Drucker, 2002, p. 304; Eldar, 2012, p. 86; Chronology, 2001a, p. 202).

On October 4, in order to bring about a ceasefire, Barak and Arafat met in Paris under the auspices of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Although a ceasefire agreement had been reached, which also determined the establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate why the violence broke out, Arafat refused to sign the document (Bregman, 2005, pp. 128-135; Sher, 2001, pp. 291-299). Three days

later, as the violence continued to intensify leaving 60 Palestinians and four Israelis dead since the outbreak of the intifada, Barak publicly announced that he was giving a 48-hour ultimatum to Arafat and the PA to stop the violence. Otherwise, he would instruct the Israeli security forces to take all necessary measures to eradicate it. Moreover, Barak reiterated his argument that Arafat and the PA are probably not partners for peace with Israel:

"An image is being formed today showing that there is probably no partner for peace. This truth is a painful one, but it is the truth and we must face it with open eyes and draw our conclusions... If the Palestinians do not stop the violence in the next two days, we will hereby see the cessation of peace negotiations by Arafat under his responsibility and initiative, and the IDF and security forces will be called upon to act by all means at their disposal... We are on the threshold of a new situation in the State of Israel. Our relations with the Palestinians have escalated severely and violently. The responsibility lies with the PA Chairman Arafat. If he wishes, he can end the violence with one simple order" (YNET, 2000).

Despite Barak's explicit threat, the Palestinian violence did not desist. On the contrary, it was only intensified. On October 12, a Palestinian mob lynched two Israeli IDF reservists at a Ramallah police station and abused their bodies, while the Palestinian security forces did nothing to prevent the atrocity. In fact, some of them even participate in this act (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 37; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 54-55). The Israeli Security Cabinet convened that day to discuss how to deal with the continuation of the Palestinian violence. Although the outrage among Security Cabinet ministers over the brutality of the Palestinians mob in Ramallah and the PA's

inability to prevent the lynching, Barak preferred to respond moderately rather than escalate the confrontation with the Palestinians. Therefore, the Security Cabinet decided to attack the police station in Ramallah where the lynching took place, the Tanzim headquarters in Gaza and Palestinian Coast Guard boats, in order to signal Arafat and the PA that the Palestinian violence must be stopped (Sher, 2001, pp. 302-303).

Despite the decision to act militarily in retaliation to the lynching, most members of the Israeli government at the time acknowledged that an Israeli military action would not bring an end to the Palestinian violence (Ben-Ami, 2004, pp. 318-319). This view was contrary to the position of the IDF, whose senior commanders asserted that only a strong military response could capitulate the Palestinian intifada. In fact, the IDF was not surprised by the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising. Already in mid-1999, Aman had estimated that the year 2000 would be a "year of decision" for the Israeli-Palestinian relations. The IDF's estimation was that Arafat and the PA might launch an armed struggle had the peace talks with Israel collapsed. Thus, acknowledging that it would face armed PA security forces in the future military confrontation with the Palestinians, the IDF began to prepare itself for this belligerent scenario (Mofaz, 2020; Ya'alon, 2020; Ya'alon, 2018, pp. 94-95; Shiffer, 2019, pp. 90-91; Peri, 2006, p. 96-97). From the first days of the uprising, IDF Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz described Arafat and the PA as perpetrators of terrorism. In this context, Mofaz argued that the Palestinian intifada was guided by Arafat, who pursued to put pressure on the Israeli government to agree to further concessions in the peace negotiations. Believing that Israel lost its deterrence abilities following its both unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon and allegedly soft reaction to the Palestinian violence in May 2000, IDF chief of staff

asserted that any demonstration of Israeli weakness is an invitation to another violent round (Drucker, 2002, pp. 328-330; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 52). Mofaz's perception was based on Aman's position, whose senior commanders asserted that the intifada was planned in advance by Arafat after the failure of the Camp David Summit, aiming to establish a Palestinian state without being committed to end the conflict with Israel (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 85-87).

The IDF's perception, in which Arafat had initiated and led the Palestinian violence, was presented to the government shortly after the outbreak of the Second Intifada. According to Moshe Ya'alon, who was IDF deputy chief of staff at the time of the outbreak of the Second Intifada, on September 30, a day after the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising, a Security Cabinet meeting was held. During the meeting, the IDF proposed to the political echelon to implement a broad plan to retake Palestinian cities in the West Bank and curb the Palestinian violence, a move that would effectively bring the Oslo Accords to an end. The IDF proposed implementing the "Thorny Field" plan, which was an operative plan to take over Palestinian cities in the West Bank. In this context, the IDF claimed that Arafat and the PA had started an initiated war against Israel, and therefore suggested that military action was needed to stop Palestinian violence (Ya'alon, 2020). Yet, while the IDF's senior command claimed that the Palestinian violent campaign led by Arafat could be defeated only through an excessive use of force, senior government ministers rejected that argument, claiming that Arafat had lost control of the Palestinian street (Ya'alon, 2018, p. 105; Ya'alon, 2020). Instead of attacking the Palestinians, the ministers suggested, Israel should help Arafat and the PA to restore calm in the Palestinian territories (Ya'alon, 2018, p. 121). Israeli Prime Minister Barak also believed that the

implementation of the "Thorny Field" plan would severely damage Israel's status among the international community (Barak, 2021a). Consequently, the political echelon led by Prime Minister Barak, which despite the Palestinian violence still hoped to reach a peace deal with Arafat and the PA, chose not to escalate the conflict. Thus, Barak's minority government, which was composed of supporters of the Oslo Accords, decided to revive the negotiation talks and to do everything possible to reach a permanent peace agreement with the Palestinians (Beilin, 2001, p. 173; Beilin, 2020).

In terms of Securitization Theory, the IDF, which fulfilled the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, pursued to securitize Arafat and the PA, suggesting that Palestinian violent campaign against Israel should be respond with a strong military action. Yet, the Israeli government, which had the authority to order the IDF to launch a military strike and hence performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, opposed that securitization move held by the IDF.

Attempts to bring about a ceasefire were continued but to no avail. On October 16-17, an emergency summit was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, with the participation of US President Bill Clinton and other world leaders. However, despite the ceasefire outline had been reached between Israel and the PA, the Palestinian violence continued and even intensified (Bregman, 2005, pp. 137-138; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 40-41). On November 1, in another desperate attempt to persuade Arafat to act to end the violence, Barak dispatched Shimon Peres, who then served as a cabinet minister, to meet with Arafat. However, this attempt was also in vain. The next day, Islamic Jihad carried out a terrorist attack in Jerusalem in which two Israeli

civilians were killed by a car bomb (Sher, 2001, pp. 320-324; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 98-100; Bregman, 2005, pp. 139-140).

Despite the rampant Palestinian violence, the Israeli prime minister still sought to return to the negotiating table with Arafat. Politically, Barak could have formed a unity government with the Likud and thus secured his government a coalition majority. In fact, Likud Chairman Ariel Sharon, who replaced Netanyahu after the 1999 election defeat, really wished to join the Barak government. Thus, by the end of October, Barak and Sharon had already reached an understanding on a unity government. However, Sharon stipulated the Likud's entering the government on Barak announcing the termination of the Oslo Accords, terms to which the latter was unwilling to bear (Barak, 2021a; Barak, 2018, pp. 391-392; Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 552-553). Alternatively, Barak preferred to reach an agreement with the ultra-Orthodox right-wing party Shas, which agreed to give his government a safety net for a month period, during which he would try to revive the peace process with the Palestinians (Beilin, 2001, p. 174; Drucker, 2002, pp. 347-352). In practice, although he could have secured himself political stability within a unity government with Sharon and Likud, Barak chose to continue the peace process with the Palestinians in order to try and exhaust any chance of reaching an agreement. Thus, during November, in parallel with the continuation of the violence, Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams continued to meet in an attempt to reach a breakthrough.

Simultaneously with the resumption of negotiations with the PA, Israel continued its military efforts to suppress the Palestinian Intifada. Barak did instruct the IDF to continue its efforts to reduce the violence. But at the same time, fearing that the crisis

would escalate and harm the peace process, Barak refrained from approving the IDF's entry into the territories held by the PA. Alternatively, in order to target Palestinian terrorists groups without harming the civilian population, Israel begun to use targeted killing measures. Thus, on November 9, Israel executed its first targeted assassination during the second intifada, eliminating a senior commander in the Fatah's military wing, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, by firing a helicopter missile at his car in Bethlehem. Using this method, Israel managed to eliminate more than ten senior Palestinian terrorists by the end of 2000 (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 98). Thus, since the political echelon did not authorize the IDF to implement "Field of Thorns" plan, the latter was required to address Palestinian terrorism without entering the Palestinian territories. As a result, targeted assassinations have become the main tool of the military echelon to tackle Palestinian terrorism (Ya'alon, 2020; Dichter, 2021).

Despite the Israeli targeted killings, Palestinian terrorist organizations have continued to carry out terrorist attacks. On November 20, Palestinians executed another terrorist attack in Kfar Darom settlement in the Gaza Strip, killing two civilians by a roadside bomb exploded alongside a bus carrying children to school. In response, the Security Cabinet authorized the IDF to bomb PA infrastructure targets in the Gaza Strip (Drucker, 2002, pp. 310-311). But the decision was not made unanimously, as the Security Cabinet ministers disagreed on how to respond to the continuation of Palestinian violence. Out of six ministers, three supported the bombing, one opposed it, and two abstained, emphasizing the reluctance among the Israeli political echelon to use significant military force against Arafat and the PA, which were still perceived as partners for a peace agreement with Israel (Beilin, 2001, p. 177; Beilin, 2020). According to Yossi Beilin, who was the Minister of Justice and a member of the Security

Cabinet, all the cabinet ministers had no doubt that Arafat was not making any efforts to stop Palestinian terrorism. Yet at the same time, it was clear to them that Arafat and the PA were still partners for peace with Israel (Beilin, 2020).

In addition, on November 22, Israel carried out another targeted assassination and eliminated the commander of the Al-Aqsa Brigades in Rafah. A few hours later, Hamas executed its first terrorist attack in the Second Palestinian Intifada, detonating a car bomb in Hadera in which two Israelis were killed. In response, a senior member of Hamas' military wing in Nablus was assassinated by Israel the next day (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 204-205).

On November 28, after Shas announced that it would no longer provide a safety net to his minority government, Barak announced that he was ready to go to early elections for prime minister and the Knesset. However, on December 9, Barak surprisingly announced his resignation. Since the Israeli election law at that time stipulated that if the prime minister resigns, the Knesset will continue to serve until the end of its term on (which in the above case was October 2003) and a snap election for prime minister will be held within sixty days, Barak's resignation forced the need to hold elections for prime minister and not for the Knesset. In addition, the elections law also determined that only an incumbent MK could run for prime minister's position. Hence, in his resignation, Barak wished to block the expected candidacy of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who did not serve as a MK then. In fact, polls have clearly indicated that while Netanyahu was expected to defeat Barak by a gap of 20%, the battle between Barak and Sharon was predicted to be a very close race. Thus, while the battle against Netanyahu seemed lost for Barak, the latter was

positive that he could win against Sharon. Eventually, although the Knesset enacted a law that allowed Netanyahu to run, the latter decided not to run in the prime ministerial election, arguing that elections to the Knesset should also be held. In this context, Netanyahu claimed that in the current composition of the Knesset, in which the Likud has only 19 seats, it would not be possible to properly manage state affairs. Thus, when the Knesset refused to dissolve itself, it was determined that the prime ministerial election between Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon would be held on February 6, 2001 (Drucker 2002, pp. 353-359; Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 555-558).

In parallel with the preparations for the elections, Barak instructed the Israeli negotiating team on December 6 to make every endeavor to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, even if the final accord would be painful and difficult for the Israeli side (Sher, 2001, pp. 341-342; Ben-Ami, 2004, pp. 356-357). However, after the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams failed to bridge the gaps in the core issues of the conflict, the Clinton Administration decided to present an outline for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. According to the "Clinton Parameters" presented to both sides on December 23, a Palestinian State would be established, covering the entire territory of the Gaza Strip and 94-96% of the West Bank; Israel would annex 4-6% for the purpose of the settlement blocs and in return would grant the Palestinians 1-3% of its sovereign territory; on Security, there would be an international force presence along the Jordan Valley that would be under Palestinian sovereignty; on Refugees, the principle of the right of return to the Palestinian State would be upheld, but there would be no right of return to Israel, which would reserve the right to determine whether to receive refugees into its territory and their number; on Jerusalem, the principle would be that what is Jewish would be under Israeli sovereignty and what is

Arab would be under Palestinian sovereignty, and on Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif there would be a division of sovereignty: Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall and the sacred part connected to it, and Palestinian sovereignty at the rest of the site, with mutual agreement not to carry out archeological excavations at the compound (Ben-Ami, 2004, pp. 379-381; Sher, 2001, pp. 360-363; Qurie, 2008, pp. 279-285). Eventually, while Barak's government accepted the Clinton Parameters on December 27, Arafat refrained from giving a positive answer and in fact opposed the outline (Clinton, 2005, pp. 932-935, 939-941; Ross, 2015, p. 296; Bregman, 2005, pp. 145-147). It seems that Arafat believed that the new US administration under President George W. Bush, which was due to take office on January 20, 2001, would be more sympathetic to the Palestinian side, forcing further concessions on Israel (Qurie, 2015, p. 7; Abrams, 2013, p. 8; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 102).

Although Arafat rejected the Clinton Parameters, Israeli Prime Minister Barak believed that there was a slim chance of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians. However, after members of his government pressured him to make one last effort, claiming that Arafat was indeed interested in reaching an agreement before the Israeli election, Barak was convinced and gave his confirmation to the talks (Ben-Ami, 2004, pp. 418-425). Thus, on January 21-27, in parallel with the continuation of the Palestinian Intifada, the two delegations met for a peace summit in Taba, Egypt. However, although the Israeli side improved its proposals to the Palestinians, the latter refused the offer and the Taba conference ended without an agreement (Qurie, 2008b, p. 320; Beilin, 2001, pp. 215-216). In practice, Arafat was not prepared at this stage to reach an agreement, as senior members of the Palestinian delegation told the Israeli negotiating team (Sher, 2001, p. 408).

On February 6, the Israeli prime ministerial election was held. As expected, Likud Chairman Ariel Sharon defeated Prime Minister Ehud Barak by a huge margin, 62% vs 38%. The Israeli public, whose personal security has deteriorated to an unprecedented level, voted no confidence in Prime Minister Ehud Barak, whose peace policy has collapsed (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 104-105).

Since the outbreak of the Palestinian Second Intifada at the end of September 2000 until Barak's defeat in the prime ministerial election in early February 2001, 40 Israelis and 320 Palestinians have been killed. In terms of Securitization Theory, while the IDF tried to securitize Arafat and the PA, claiming that the latter had started a war of terror against Israel, the Barak government, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, rejected this securitization move. Alternatively, despite the continuation of the Palestinian violence, the Barak government chose to continue the negotiations talks with Arafat and the PA, which were still perceived by the Israeli political echelon as partners for peace. Prime Minister Ehud Barak did blame Arafat and the PA for the outbreak of violence and claimed that the latter were not doing anything to stop it. However, Barak and his government constantly worked to keep the door open for peace talks with Arafat and the PA. In fact, from the outbreak of the intifada until the end of its tenure, the Barak government ordered the IDF to carry out restraining military activity, which would ensure the containment of the conflict within borders that would allow reasonable security for Israeli citizens, without harming the peace process with the Palestinians (Bar-Siman-Tov, Lavie, Michael and Bar-Tal, 2005, p. 19). In this context, the political echelon did instruct the IDF to respond to Palestinian violence, and along with targeted killings against Palestinian terrorist organizations, also authorized to bomb PA targets. However, one cannot ignore the fact that in the

entire period from the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising to the end of the Barak government, the political echelon refrained from securitizing Arafat and the PA, hence authorizing the military echelon to launch a large-scale military operation against the Palestinians. It is likely that Barak's minority government, which relied on center-left parties and was perceived as a government that went very far towards the Palestinians in the negotiations, could easily have launched a military operation against the PA in response to the outbreak of the Second Intifada. However, as it is mentioned above, the Barak government, which perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace with Israel, chose to contain the Palestinian violence in order not to harm the chances of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians.

Sharon wins Elections. Palestinian Terrorism escalates

Following Ariel Sharon's victory in the prime ministerial election, the main challenge he faced was to eradicate the second Palestinian Intifada. For Sharon, the main culprit for the Palestinian violence and terrorist attacks was PA Chairman Yasser Arafat (Landau, 2014, p. 1554). In fact, Sharon loathed Arafat, perceiving him as the greatest murderer of Jews since Hitler (Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 230; Aronoff, 2014, p. 83). Hence, Sharon's perception was the same as the IDF senior command, which saw Arafat and the PA as the ones who started an initiated war against Israel. As mentioned above, this IDF claim was contrary to the position of the political echelon during the Barak government, which saw Arafat and the PA as partners for peace with Israel. Under Sharon leadership, however, there was a consensus between the

majority of the political echelon and the military echelon regarding Arafat and the PA, perceiving them as perpetrators of terrorism (Peri, 2006, pp. 109-110).

Sharon's perception of Arafat and the PA was not surprising. For the seven years since the signing of the Oslo Accords with Israel, Arafat has done nothing to prepare a functioning infrastructure for the future Palestinian state, nor has he used the enormous funds received from the international community, over five billion dollars, to improve the lives of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Instead, Arafat established a corrupt government with inflated security mechanisms beyond what was agreed in the Oslo Accords, and refrained from seriously confronting Palestinian terrorist organizations (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 51-54; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 15). In fact, when it comes to the Second Intifada and Palestinian violence against Israel, Arafat and the PA have played a double game. Despite statements condemning the attacks, senior PA security officials provided financial assistance to Palestinian terrorist organizations with Arafat's approval. In addition, PA security personnel, who instead of fighting the Palestinian terrorist organizations as required by the Oslo Accords, have often carried out terrorist attacks themselves. The PA even aided the suicide cult by participating in condolence visits to the families of the terrorists and providing them with financial support (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 216-218).

In essence, Sharon, who perceived Arafat and the PA as the main cause of Palestinian violence and terrorism, believed that the only way to stop it was through a large-scale military operation, in which the IDF would enter Palestinian cities in order to uproot the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure. But in order to carry out such an operation,

Sharon realized that he needed broad legitimacy, both in the Israeli internal arena and in the international arena vis-à-vis the American administration (Ya'alon, 2020; Drucker, 2013). Hence, Sharon was guided by two iron principles that burned into him after years of political experience:

First, Sharon understood that he must maintain the unity of the Israeli people, especially during war. When he served as defense minister during the first Lebanon war in 1982, Sharon learned firsthand the price of a controversial war. Sharon well remembered the criticism of him from the Israeli left-wing camp regarding the First Lebanon War, which was called at the time a "war of choice". As a result, Sharon realized that he must maintain national unity at all costs, and therefore he saw the Labor Party as the most central and important part of his government (Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 118-119). Consequently, immediately after winning the prime ministerial election in February, Sharon declared that his goal was to form a national unity government with the Labor Party.

Second, Sharon perceived the relations with the United States as a fundamental component of Israeli policy, and that without the support of the only superpower in the world, he would not be able to implement his agenda. Thus, for Sharon, the relationship with the Americans was the most important and significant in Israel's foreign relations. The values of democracy and freedom shared by the two nations, the common resistance to the attempts of Soviet expansion during the Cold War and the face of radical Islamic terrorism, especially after the 9/11 attacks, created a partnership of fate and the closest ties between Israel and the United States (Sharon, 2011, p. 348). Therefore, Sharon made a rule for himself that he would not do anything

against the will of the Americans, keep every promise he made to them, try his best to share information with them, and create a system of trust in front of them (Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 121-122). Contrary to his perception of the United States, Sharon perceived Europe as supporting the Palestinians and pursuing anti-Israel policies. In fact, Sharon believed that the roots of that hostility against Israel stemmed from anti-Semitism towards the Jews, which in its modern form was expressed in anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist views. In addition, Sharon believed that the Muslim immigration to Europe contributed to anti-Semitism across the continent, as Muslim immigrants, who brought with them the ingrained hatred of Israel and the Jews, gradually became an influential factor in European politics (Sharon, 2011, pp. 337-338; Weissglas, 2012, pp. 104-105). During his tenure as prime minister, Sharon did hold talks with key European leaders on the Palestinian issue and asked them to press Arafat to fight Palestinian terrorism. Nevertheless, Sharon saw no room for comparison between European countries and the United States, knowing full well that the latter was the important state from which Israel must receive its political back in the fight against Palestinian terrorism (Sharon, 2011, pp. 359-360).

In terms of Securitization Theory, in order to securitize Arafat and the PA, the Israeli prime minister, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, needed to convince two types of audiences. The first was the Israeli cabinet, which according to the Israeli law is the body with the legal authority to authorize a military strike. Thus, the cabinet performed the role of the **Legal Audience**. The second audience was the Bush Administration, which Sharon perceived its support (or lack of resistance) as an essential factor for his securitization policy against the Palestinian terrorism. Thus, according to the conceptual framework suggested in this thesis, the American

administration under US President George W. Bush performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

In early March, the government of Ariel Sharon was sworn in, relying on a majority of 80 MKs. Sharon's government was composed mainly of right-wing and ultra-Orthodox parties that opposed the continuation of the Oslo Peace Process with the Palestinians. Yet, as expected, the main partner of Sharon and Likud was the Labor Party, which was in fact the largest faction in the government with 26 seats. As part of the agreement between Likud and Labor, the latter received the defense and foreign portfolios (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 576-578).

Upon taking office as prime minister, Sharon reiterated his commitment to achieving peace with the Palestinians while being willing to make painful concessions at the negotiation table. But before Israel makes concessions for peace, Sharon declared that the Palestinians must stop the violence, stating that Israel will not negotiate under terrorism (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, p. 578). In general, Sharon opposed the concessions proposed by the Barak government in the negotiations with the Palestinians (Landau, 2014, pp. 1488-1489). But in practice, the new Israeli prime minister negotiated secretly with the Palestinians, even before his government was sworn in. Thus, Sharon met with senior PA officials Abu Mazen and Abu Ala and offered them to establish a temporary Palestinian state on 42% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, territories that were already controlled by the Palestinians under the Oslo Accords. Yet, Arafat, who apparently believed that the international and Arab momentum was working in his favor, decided to reject the proposal (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 109-111; Bregman, 2005, p. 153; Landau, 2014, pp. 1453-1547).

In parallel, violence and terrorism have not stopped. During February-March, 16 Israelis had been murdered in terrorist attacks and 42 Palestinians had been killed in clashes with Israeli security forces (Chronology, 2001b, 2001c). In response to Palestinian violence, Sharon reiterated that Israel will not return to the negotiating table until Palestinian terrorism ceases (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, p. 582).

Sharon's policy not to negotiate with Arafat as long as the Palestinian violence continues was backed by the American administration. In practice, the entry of the new US President George W. Bush into the White House has led to a change in US policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Compared to former US President Bill Clinton, who tried his best to bring about an Israeli Palestinian peace agreement, Bush decided that the United States would stop its attempts to solve this intractable conflict. Prior to reaching an accord, the new US president decided that his administration would first make an endeavor to end the violence. It is not inconceivable that Clinton's warning to Bush not to trust Arafat, blaming the latter for the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, also influenced the new US president. Thus, when he took office in January 2001, Bush instructed his staff not to interfere in the Israeli-Palestinian theme. In addition, the new US president announced that Clinton Parameters are no longer valid and are not part of the policy of his administration. Finally, while demanding from Arafat to stop the Palestinian violence, Bush assured Sharon that his administration would not force a peace agreement on the parties and that the United States would protect Israel. Practically, Bush's agenda toward the Israeli Palestinian conflict surprised the leaders of the Arab world, many of whom believed that the new American president would continue the policy of his father, President George W.H. Bush, who during his tenure as president

in the years 1989-1993 chose to put pressure on Israel to make concessions (Kurtzer et al., 2013, pp. 154-158; Abrams, 2013, pp. 5-9).

Despite their support for the Jewish State, the US administration did everything in its power to motivate Israel not to act militarily inside the Palestinian territories. For instance, in mid-April, there was an escalation in Palestinian violence when a rocket was first fired from the Gaza Strip at the city of Sderot located in southern Israel. In response, large IDF forces entered the town of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip from which the shooting took place. In fact, this was the first time that large IDF forces had entered Area A, which was under PA control under the Oslo Accords. But the next day, following American pressure on Israel to leave, Sharon ordered the IDF to withdraw from the Gaza Strip (Ya'alon, 2020; Sharon, 2011, pp. 343-344; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 122-123; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 56). In addition, although the Bush administration at the time abandoned the option of resuming the peace process, US Secretary of State Colin Powell made efforts to bring about a ceasefire. The US administration relied on the Mitchell Report, which was published in late April and called on the Palestinian side to stop the violence and for Israel to freeze construction in the settlements as a condition for resuming the peace process. However, these attempts were futile because Palestinian terrorism did not stop and even intensified (Kurtzer et al., 2013, pp. 159-160; Abrams, 2013, p. 13). Thus, on May 18, Hamas carried out a suicide terror attack in Netanya in which five Israelis were murdered. In response, for the first time since the Six Day War, the Israeli Air Force attacked Palestinian targets in the West Bank using an F-16 fighter jet (YNET, 2001a).

Despite the continuation of Palestinian violence and terrorism, on May 22, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, opting to transfer the ball to the Palestinian side, declared a unilateral ceasefire. Sharon even asked the Americans to pressure Arafat to make a similar move, but the latter was not convinced and Palestinian violence did not stop and even intensified (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 127). Thus, on June 1, Hamas carried out another suicide bombing outside a nightclub in the Tel Aviv Dolphinarium compound, murdering 21 Israelis, most of them teenagers. The next day, a cabinet meeting was held in which the IDF proposed to the political echelon to implement the "Thorny Field" plan, in which the IDF would enter into the Palestinian cities in the West Bank to fight the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure. In addition, the IDF sought to define Arafat and the PA as enemies. The IDF senior command believed that there was no other way to curb Palestinian terrorism besides entering inside the Palestinian cities, eradicating the terrorist infrastructure that operated under the auspices of Arafat and the PA. While Prime Minister Sharon and right-wing ministers supported military action, Labor ministers, who still perceived Arafat and the PA as partners in the peace process, opposed the IDF's plan and supported a more moderate action against the Palestinians. Foreign Minister Peres even involved German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who visited in Israel at the time, pressuring Arafat to publicly call for a ceasefire. Thus, at the end of the cabinet meeting, it was decided not to respond militarily against Arafat and the PA. Moreover, a compromise was reached regarding the definition of Arafat and the PA: not as an "enemy" as demanded by the IDF, but as an "entity that supports and organizes terrorism" (Ya'alon, 2020; Ya'alon, 2018, pp. 121-122; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 128-129).

In terms of Securitization Theory, the attempt of Sharon and the IDF to securitize Arafat and the PA ended in failure. While Sharon and most members of the government from right-wing parties perceived Arafat as a terrorist and the PA as a terrorist entity, Labor ministers still perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace. While Sharon and right-wing ministers believed that terrorism should be fought without any "political considerations", Labor senior ministers, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, made a distinction between Arafat and the PA, which must be strengthened in order to continue the peace process, and Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations in which Israel must fight (Henig, 2005, p. 173; Eiland, 2018, pp. 1087-1089; Gil, 2018, p. 245). In fact, the disagreement within the coalition and the gap between Sharon and the IDF's perception compared to the Labor minister's position regarding Arafat and the PA was well illustrated in late July when IDF Chief of Staff Mofaz called the PA a "terrorist entity". Mofaz's statement was sharply criticized by Israeli Foreign Minister Peres, who for his part claimed that the PA does not engage in terrorism but even occasionally confronts it. However, Peres admitted that there are branches in the PA that deal with terrorism (Haaretz, 2001). As a result of the disagreement among the political echelon, the possibility of securitization of Arafat and the PA became impossible at that stage. According to Shaul Mofaz, when he met with Prime Minister Sharon and explained him that there was no other way to stop Palestinian terrorism other than entering Palestinian cities in the West Bank, the latter replied that the political situation did not allow Israel to take such action (Mofaz, 2020).

The shocking scenes of the Dolphinarium attack have led to enormous pressure on Arafat to call for an end to the violence. In response to the attack, the US

administration decided to send CIA Director George Tenet to try bringing both sides to a ceasefire. On June 12, Tenet even presented a ceasefire document to both sides, which went into effect two days later. But the Americans' endeavors were in vain, as the violence did not cease. On the Palestinian side, Arafat chose not to confront Palestinian terrorist organizations, which continued to carry out terrorist attacks, mainly against civilians. One of the most devastating terror attacks was on August 19, when Hamas carried out a suicide bombing at the Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem, murdering 15 Israelis, including eight children. In retaliation, in order to remove as many civilians as possible from the cycle of violence, the IDF continued to carry out targeted assassinations against terrorist operatives (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 129-137; Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 585-589).

In response to the continued Palestinian terrorism, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon declared in late June that only after seven days without Palestinian terrorism incidents would Israel agree to resume negotiation on ceasefire. In practice, Sharon's position received the support of the White House, when US President Bush declared in August that Israel would not negotiate under terrorism. At the same time, in order to appease the Arab world and especially Saudi Arabia, which has expressed resentment over the new US administration's policy of non-intervention in the Israeli Palestinian Conflict, Bush stated his support for the establishment of a Palestinian state (Kurtzer et al., 2013, pp. 160-161; Abrams, 2013, pp. 13-15).

Meanwhile, disagreement continued within the Israeli government regarding Arafat and the PA. On the one hand, Israeli Foreign Minister Peres, who still perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace, said that talks should be held with Arafat in order to

stop the violence and implement the Mitchell Report. On the other hand, Prime Minister Sharon stated that Arafat is the main obstacle for peace, opposing any possibility of resuming negotiations as long as terrorism continues:

"Arafat signed many agreements, but did not honor them... Arafat chose a strategy of terrorism immediately after Camp David, even though former Prime Minister Ehud Barak was willing to compromise that no former prime minister was willing to make... We cannot forcibly change the Palestinians' views on Arafat, but another person in his place, more pragmatic, will be able to continue the peace talks" (Globes, 2001).

9/11 Terror Attacks: America's Perception started to change

On September 11, Al Qaeda's terrorists deliberately crashed two passenger planes over the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center in Manhattan, New York. Nearly 3,000 civilians were killed in this horrific terror attack, which was the largest offence on US soil since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Al Qaeda's terror attack had an immediate impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, leading to a fundamental change in the US government's position on Arab terrorism. Thus, the Bush administration gave firm support and backing to the Israeli fight against Palestinian terrorism. For instance, the American opposition to target killings conducted by Israel waned and virtually disappeared (Weissglas, 2012, p. 164; Eiland, 2018, pp. 1118-1119; Abrams, 2013, p. 20). In this context, US President Bush refused to accept the comparison between suicide bombings executed by Palestinians terrorists against civilians and military operations conducted by Israel in order to protect its civilians. According to Bush, if the US has the right to defend itself in order

to prevent terrorist attacks, then all other democracies in the world have the same right (Bush, 2010, p. 400).

For Sharon, the 9/11 attacks were a golden opportunity to securitize Arafat and the PA, comparing them to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. In his conversation with US Secretary of State Powell two days after the terror attack in New York, Sharon emphasized the equivalence between Arafat and bin Laden:

"There is bin Laden as a terrorist threat, and there is Arafat, who regularly uses terrorism to achieve his goals. He has adopted a strategy of terrorism, he has a coalition of terrorism. When it comes to attitude, Arafat is like bin Laden. They both have a terrorist coalition" (Walla, 2001a).

However, Israeli Foreign Minister Peres, who still perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace with Israel, continued to pressure Sharon to follow a diplomatic path with the Palestinians. Thus, Peres demanded from the Israeli prime minister to allow him to meet with the Palestinian leader in order to reach a ceasefire agreement (Gil, 2018, pp. 252-255). The US administration also pressured Sharon to allow Peres to meet with Arafat. After the 9/11 attacks, the American interest was to form a broad international coalition against terrorism incorporated with pro-American Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt. But the condition of the Arab states to join was that progress be made between Israel and the Palestinians (Kurtzer et al., 2013, pp. 161-162; Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 591-593). Eventually, Sharon relented after Peres threatened that the Labor Party would leave the government, and the meeting took place on September 26 (Gil, 2018, pp. 256-257). In fact, Arafat was negatively affected by the 9/11 attacks. While Israelis expressed sympathy with the pain of the Americans,

Palestinians welcomed Al Qaeda's terrorist attack. Incidents of outbursts of joy and handing out sweets in the streets while carrying pictures of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden were seen on US television screens. Consequently, Arafat realized that following the 9/11 attacks he would need to show that he was not belong to the evil axis that supports terrorism. Hence, during his meeting with Peres, Arafat agreed to start implementing the Tenet document (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 166-176; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 138-147; Qurie, 2015, pp. 55-58).

But the Palestinian violence has not stopped. On the contrary, it has even escalated, as on October 17, Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi was assassinated at a hotel in Jerusalem by Palestinian terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In fact, Zeevi's assassination was carried out in retaliation for the death of PFLP leader Abu Ali Mustafa, who was killed by Israel on August 27 (Landau, 2014, p. 1615; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 147-148). In fact, one day before his assassination, Minister Zeevi announced his resignation from the government together with his faction partner, Infrastructure Minister Avigdor Lieberman, in protest of Sharon's restraint policy and the Peres-Arafat meeting. But following Zeevi's assassination, the right-wing faction "National Union-Yisrael Beiteinu" decided not to leave the government (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, p. 596).

Not surprisingly, Sharon accused Arafat and the PA for the assassination of Minister Zeevi:

"Only a regime that seeks the destruction of the State of Israel can sponsor such murderers. The entire responsibility lies with Arafat, as the one who commits and has used terrorism and has not taken any serious steps to thwart terrorism. We want peace

with the Palestinian people - but there will be no compromise with terrorism" (YNET, 2001b).

In response to Zeevi's assassination, Israel was operating deep in Palestinian territory as IDF forces entered a number of Palestinian cities in the West Bank. Although the IDF temporarily occupied a number of Palestinian cities, including Nablus, Ramallah and Jenin, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon stated that Israel had no intention of collapsing the PA or occupying new territories. In addition, Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer clarified that since the PA does not thwart terrorist attacks, Israel has no choice but to take actions to protect its citizens and prevent Palestinian terrorists from launching attacks (Walla, 2001b). Eventually, following American pressure on Israel to withdraw, The IDF left Palestinian cities on October 25 (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 596-597).

At the end of November, in an attempt to end the violence, which since the outbreak of the second intifada led to the deaths of 126 Israelis and 381 Palestinians, the US administration decided to send a new envoy to the Middle East, General Anthony Zinni. Meanwhile, Palestinian terrorism did not stop, as in early December, Hamas executed two terror attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa, murdering 26 Israelis in less than twelve hours. Another terrorist attack was carried out on December 12, this time by al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, in which ten Israelis were murdered. In response to the attacks, the Israeli government decided to halt negotiations through the mediation of the American envoy Zinni, who in turn returned to the United States for consultation. Arafat, who has been under pressure from the United States to act against the Palestinian terrorism, declared a ceasefire on December 16. Although suicide

bombings have temporarily stopped, Palestinian violence has still been conducted. In addition, it was clear to both Israelis and Americans that Arafat and the PA were not taking any real actions to curb terrorism (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 177-180; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 165-168).

In the meantime, Israeli Foreign Minister Peres continued in his attempts to bring about a ceasefire, efforts that were in coordination with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon. On December 14, Peres and PA official Abu Ala reached a draft of an agreement that comprised three stages: (1) both sides will announce a ceasefire based on the Tenant Plan and the Mitchell Report within six weeks; (2) Israel will recognize a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338 within eight weeks; (3) negotiations for the permanent status agreement will begin in one year and be implemented within two years. However, after the Peres-Abu Ala document was leaked to the media on December 23, it was immediately repudiated by Sharon and Arafat (Gil, 2018, pp. 266-275; Qurie, 2015, pp. 65-69; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 190-194).

Israel captures "Karine A"; Arafat lost Washington

While the prevailing perception in Israel, both among the political and the military echelons, was that Arafat is a terrorist who orchestrated a terror campaign against the Jewish State, the US administration still perceived Arafat as a statesman. This fact made it very difficult for Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, who opted to defeat Palestinian terrorism through a large-scale military operation inside the Palestinian area. Sharon

believed that he could not conduct such an operation to curb Palestinian terrorism without the support, or at least the lack of resistance, of the Bush Administration. Hence, Sharon tried to convince the Americans that the Palestinian leadership is not a partner for peace with Israel, and that Arafat and the PA are leading terror campaign against the Jewish state. The fact was that since he came to power in March until the end of 2001, Sharon's endeavors have not borne fruit. Yet on January 3, after the IDF captured the ship "Karine A", on which about 50 tons of Iranian weapons intended for the PA were found, Arafat ended his career in Washington. In practice, already back in the spring of 2001, the Israeli intelligence was aware about the PA's plans to smuggle a large shipment of weapons from Iran with the assistance of Hezbollah. Through the PA's chief procurement and finance officer, Fuad Shubaki, the ship and the weapons on it were purchased, inextricably tying Arafat to the episode. Not surprisingly, Arafat denied any connection to the affair. But the US administration, which saw the evidence linking Arafat and the PA to purchasing weapons from Iran, realized that the Palestinian leader was lying. Consequently, perceiving Arafat as a terrorist who is collaborating with Iran and Hezbollah while the United States is waging a war on terror, the Bush Administration decided to sever all contact with Arafat (Abrams, 2013, pp. 24-27; Kurtzer et al., 2013, pp. 164-165; Bregman, 2005, pp. 168-173; Bush, 2010, p. 401; Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 180-181; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 169-170).

For Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, who has so far claimed that Arafat and the PA have been involved in terrorism, the "Karine A" was a solid proof that he was right all along:

Arafat chooses to continue lying. He chooses to continue trying to deceive the world, sign agreements and break them... The arms ship behind us is part of the war on terror being waged against us by the PA. This terrorist ship that made its way to the shores of Gaza, carried what was supposed to threaten each of us... The seized weapons and ammunition prove once again that the PA is directing all its efforts to terrorism, preparing the offensive infrastructure for the next waves... This is the choice of the PA chairman. Arafat chooses to buy long-range rockets instead of educating children. Arafat chooses to purchase mortars instead of investing the money in creating jobs. Arafat chooses to invest tens of millions of dollars in missiles, machine guns and mines instead of investing them in the welfare of his people" (YNET, 2002a).

Meanwhile, despite Arafat's call for a ceasefire, reality has shown that the Palestinian violence continues. On January 9, four IDF soldiers were killed in a Hamas shooting attack on the Gaza Strip border (Haaretz, 2002; Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 166). Five days later, Israel successfully eliminated the head of the Tanzim in Tulkarem, Raed Karmi, who was responsible for the deaths of twelve Israelis during 2001. Despite fears that Karmi's assassination would lead to an end to the ceasefire and the resumption of suicide bombings, Sharon approved the operation (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 182-188; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 170-171). Hence, as expected, on January 17, Fatah carried out a terrorist attack in retaliation for Karmi's death, when a terrorist from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades entered a Bat Mitzvah celebration in Hadera and murdered six Israelis (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 213-215; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 171).

In another effort to reach a ceasefire, Sharon met on January 30 with senior PA officials Abu Mazen, Abu Ala and Muhammad Rashid. At the meeting, Sharon again proposed to his interlocutors the establishment of a Palestinian State that would include Areas A and B, which incorporated 42% of the total area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and were already under PA control under the Oslo Accords. The Israeli prime minister, who believed then that the time had not yet come for a permanent agreement between the parties, offered his Palestinian interlocutors a long-term ceasefire, but the latter refused his proposals (Qurie, 2015, pp. 73-74).

Palestinian terrorism did not stop and even intensified in February, leaving 33 Israelis dead. On February 16, a terrorist from the PFLP carried out a suicide bombing in Karnei Shomron and murdered three Israelis (YNET, 2002b). Three days later, on February 19, six IDF soldiers were killed in a shooting attack by Palestinians at an IDF checkpoint near Ramallah (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 222). In response, that same night, IDF forces carried out retaliatory actions aimed primarily at PA security checkpoints, in which dozens of Palestinian policemen were killed (Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 196-197). In addition, on February 26, IDF forces entered Nablus and Jenin, two Palestinian cities in the West Bank from which Palestinian terrorist organizations operated. After five days of fighting, in which dozens of terrorists were killed, IDF forces left the area (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 226-228; YNET, 2002c).

Palestinian Terrorism at its peak; Israel launches "Defensive Shield"

March 2002 will be remembered as the most deadly month for Israeli casualties in the entire Second Intifada, when 133 Israelis were murdered in Palestinian terrorist attacks. On March 2, al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades carried out a suicide attack outside a synagogue in Jerusalem, killing ten Israelis, six of them children (Abrams, 2013, p. 27; YNET, 2002d). The next day, March 3, ten IDF soldiers were killed in a Palestinian shooting attack at a checkpoint near the Ofra settlement in the West Bank. In response, the IDF entered the city of Tulkarm and killed dozens of Palestinian terrorists (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 228; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 198). On March 8, Sharon even announced that he was giving up his demand for seven days without Palestinian terrorism as a condition for resuming ceasefire negotiations. But the next day, March 9, Hamas executed another suicide terror attack in a cafe in Jerusalem, murdering eleven Israelis (Abrams, 2013, p. 28; YNET, 2002e). On March 14, US envoy Zinni returned to the area to promote a ceasefire (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, p. 231). However, the Palestinian terrorism continued as on March 20, Islamic Jihad carried out suicide bombing on a bus at Megiddo Junction, murdering seven Israelis (YNET, 2002f). The next day, March 21, another suicide terror attack was executed in Jerusalem, this time by al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, in which three Israelis were killed (YNET, 2002g). Eventually, on March 26, after despairing that the two sides had not reached an agreement, Zinni put on the table a ceasefire proposal on his behalf, giving both sides three days to respond to it. Zinni's proposal, which was a combination of the Tenet Plan and the Mitchell document, contained a clear demand from Arafat and the PA to dismantle the terrorist organizations, a demand that the Palestinians

vehemently refused to accept. A few hours later, Sharon announced that he agreed to Zini's proposal, who in turn waited to hear the Palestinian side's response (Harel and Issacharoff, 2004, pp. 231-232; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 211-212; Bregman, 2005, pp. 176-179; Eiland, 2018, pp. 1143-1146).

While Zini was waiting for the Palestinian response to his proposal for a ceasefire, Hamas executed another suicide terror attack at a hotel in Netanya, where hundreds of Israelis celebrated the eve of Passover. The result of this terror attack was particularly deadly, when the suicide bomber blew himself up and murdered 29 Israelis (Bregman, 2005, pp. 179-182). In response to the murderous terrorist attack, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon realized that the time had come to launch a large-scale military operation to eradicate Palestinian terrorism. Thus, immediately after he heard about the terror attack in Netanya, Prime Minister Sharon indicated IDF Chief of Staff Mofaz that it was time to launch a large-scale military operation against the Palestinian terrorism (Walla, 2014). In his conversation with Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, Sharon also clarified angrily that this time Israel must respond forcefully against the Palestinian terrorism (Bregman, 2005, pp. 182-183).

Meanwhile, in order to pacify the Israeli response, the American envoy Zinni tried to persuade the PA leadership to respond positively to his security plan. But Arafat refused to make an explicit commitment, which led Zinni to realize that his mediation efforts were over (Bregman, 2005, pp. 183-184).

Later that night, Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer and the IDF High Command met and discussed the course of action against Palestinian terrorism. While Ben-Eliezer argued that a strong action should be taken against Hamas, IDF chiefs

suggested that the only way to stop Palestinian terrorism was to execute a large-scale military operation that incorporates the entry of large IDF forces into Palestinian cities in the West Bank. Deputy IDF Chief of Staff Ya'alon argued that:

"For the past few months we have been beating Hamas as hard as we can, but we have not been able to stop the wave of terrorism, which peaked in March. The only way to suppress terrorism requires us to reconquer all West Bank cities and stay there as long as necessary".

Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer, who also served as chairman of the Labor Party, which as mentioned perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace with Israel, feared that an extensive military operation could lead to a full confrontation with the PA security forces, and in the worst case scenario, leading to the collapse of the PA under Arafat's rule and practically the end of the entire Oslo Accords. Mofaz and Ya'alon, who agreed with the defense minister's claim, replied that there was no other way to stop Palestinian terrorism other than launching a large-scale military operation in Palestinian cities in the West Bank (Eiland, 2018, pp. 1025-1028).

The next day, March 28, the government convened in order to decide whether to launch large-scale military operation. As expected, the debate was intense and the tension between Likud and Labor ministers, and especially Foreign Minister Peres, who appalled by the possibility that the operation would lead to a direct and high-intensity confrontation with the Palestinian security forces and the collapse of the PA (Eiland, 2018, pp. 1028-1029). At the end of the discussion in the government, both Peres and Vilnai decided to abstain from voting on the decision to launch Operation Defensive Shield. Although Vilnai supported launching the operation, he did not trust

Sharon's intentions. Vilnai well remembered that as defense minister during the first Lebanon war in 1982, Sharon assured the Begin government that the IDF would operate only at a depth of 40 km inside the Lebanese territory. But in practice, despite Sharon's promise, the IDF operated in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, a distance of 120 km from the border with Israel. Peres, who also abstained in the vote, was loyal to the Oslo Accords, and thus feared that a large-scale military operation in the West Bank would lead to the termination of the agreements with the Palestinians (Vilnai, 2020). Even then, Peres still argued that Israel should work with Arafat and the PA and not lead to the dissolution of the PA and the expulsion of Arafat (Gil, 2018, pp. 260-261).

Another theme that was discussed at the government meeting was the concern that launching a large-scale military operation inside the Palestinian cities in the West Bank would lead to heavy international pressure on Israel to halt and withdraw. Nevertheless, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, who did not consider any player in the international arena other than the US administration, believed that US President Bush understood that Israel had the right to defend itself. Sharon perceived that the current circumstances- the continuation of the Palestinian terrorism and Zinni's understanding that Arafat and the PA were not ready to act against Palestinian terrorism, would lead the Americans to support (or at least not oppose) a large-scale military operation (Eiland, 2018, pp. 1030-1031; Drucker and Shelah, 2005, pp. 214-215). Hence, perceiving that the American president endorses Israel's right to defend itself and fight terrorism, Sharon did not even call US President Bush before launching Operation Defensive Shield. Under such conditions, Sharon believed that Bush preferred not to be asked for his support, and on the other hand, perceiving that Bush supported a harsh Israeli response, Sharon did not want to risk receiving a negative

response from Washington (Drucker and Shelah, 2005, p. 221). In practice, the Israeli prime minister's perception was precise, as the American president and his staff, who were outraged by the horrific terror attack in Netanya, did not want to restrain Israel before launching Operation Defensive Shield (Kurtzer et al., 2013, p. 167). Thus, believing that the Israeli military operation would not be prolonged, the US administration granted its support to Israel (Eiland, 2018, pp. 1037-1038). It is true that several days later, especially in light of the Bush Administration's desire to form a broad coalition to attack Iraq with the support of pro-American Arab states, US President Bush asked Sharon to end the operation. Yet on the eve of the operation, there was a consensus among the US administration that Israel had the right to defend itself against Palestinian terrorism and therefore no opposition was recorded from Washington to Operation Defensive Shield (Bregman, 2005, pp. 190-193).

Eventually, on March 29, despite the criticism and the desire of the labor ministers not to escalate with Arafat and the PA, in the end all the labor ministers, with the exception of Peres and Vilnai who abstained from voting, voted in favor of launching Operation Defensive Shield (Hefez and Bloom, 2005, pp. 610-611). Following the cabinet's decision, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon declared that Israel had decided to launch Operation Defensive Shield, indicating that Arafat, who has established a coalition of terror against Israel, is an enemy of the Jewish State:

In the past few days we have witnessed horrific terrorist attacks... All this has happened at a time when Israel's hand was - and still is - extended towards peace. We have done everything in our power to achieve a cease-fire and an immediate entry into the Tenet process in order to advance any possibility of a cease-fire. All we have received in

return was terrorism, terrorism and more terrorism. No sovereign nation would tolerate such a sequence of events. Therefore, the government, in a special session lasting throughout the night, and in accordance with the recommendations from all the security agencies - the Chief of Intelligence, the Chief of the GSS, and the Director of the Mossad - has made the following decision: (1) The Government has approved principles for extensive operational activity against Palestinian terrorism. As we speak, the IDF is already inside the 'Mukta'a' in Ramallah; (2) Israel will act to crush the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure, in all its parts and components, and will carry out comprehensive activity to achieve this goal; (3) Arafat, who has established a coalition of terror against Israel, is an enemy and at this point he will be isolated; (4) The Government has authorized the mobilization of reserve forces, in accordance with the operational needs, in order to enable the IDF ongoing, lengthy activities in various terrorism centers (Sharon, 2002).

In terms of Securitization Theory, after receiving the support of both the Israeli cabinet, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, and the support (or lack of resistance) of the American government, which performed the role of the **Political Audience**, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, finally succeed in his mission to securitized Arafat and the PA.

Conclusion

Operation Defensive Shield, in which Israel launched a large-scale military operation against the Palestinian terrorism infrastructure in March 2002, is a case study that well illustrates the audience's model during the securitization process that this thesis offers. In the view of the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Arafat and the PA were conducted campaign of terrorism against the Jewish State and thus posed a security threat to the State of Israel. Hence, Sharon opted to securitize Arafat and the PA in launching a large-scale military operation to dismantle the Palestinian terror infrastructure inside the Palestinian territory in the West Bank. In term of Securitization Theory, Operation Defensive Shield was the suggested extraordinary measures for executing securitization. Yet in order to implement his agenda to securitize Arafat and the PA, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, had to obtain the approval of two types of audiences.

First, given the cabinet is the body with the legal authority in Israel to authorize the military echelon to go to war or carry out a military operation such as Operation Defensive Shield, Sharon had to obtain the approval of the cabinet. Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, the cabinet performs the role of the **Legal Audience**.

Second, due to Sharon's political perception that in order to conduct a large-scale military operation to dismantle the Palestinian terror infrastructure inside the Palestinian territory in the West Bank, Israel must obtain the support (or lack of resistance) of the American administration, US President George W. Bush performed the role of the **Political Audience**. In fact, following the events of 9/11 and the capture of the Karine A ship, which led the Americans to change their approach to Palestinian

terrorism while understanding that Arafat and the PA do not make any effort to stop Palestinian terrorism, Sharon perceived that the US administration supported Israel's right to defend itself and that US President Bush would not oppose Israel launching a wide-scale military operation in the Palestinian territories. Thus, Sharon realized that the US administration would not oppose Israeli action against Palestinian terrorism, which actually gave him the support (or lack of resistance) of the **Political Audience**.

Chapter 4

Operation "Outside the Box"

The Securitization of the Syrian Nuclear Reactor

Introduction

Operation "Outside the Box", in which Israel destroyed the nuclear reactor in Syria, is a classical illustration of Securitization. After the Israeli Mossad discovered that Syria was secretly building a nuclear reactor, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who perceived the reactor as an existential threat to the State of Israel, decided that in order to eliminate that threat, the reactor should be destroyed by a military action. In terms of Securitization Theory, Olmert performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, perceiving the Syrian nuclear reactor as a security threat to the State of Israel, and therefore he opted to securitize it. Yet, although Israel could have eliminated the Syrian reactor without the American support, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert believed that sharing this information with the Bush Administration was necessary for dealing with this security menace, hoping that the United States would carry out the strike against the reactor instead of Israel. Hence, Olmert tried to convince US President George W. Bush to conduct an American attack on the Syrian nuclear reactor. In securitization terms, since Olmert perceived the American President's support as essential for conducting a securitization act, the latter performed the role of the **Political Audience**. However, the US President Bush refused to act militarily against

the Syrian reactor, claiming that a diplomatic track should first be used to persuade Syria to dismantle the facility. Since Olmert believed that a nuclear reactor in Syria's hands constituted an existential threat to the State of Israel and should therefore be destroyed before the facility became operational, he informed US President Bush that Israel would destroy the reactor itself. In return, the American president did not object to Israeli extraordinary measures, and replied that apart from bombing the reactor, the United States would assist Israel as much as necessary. Even though he received Bush's support for his securitization act, Olmert had to obtain the approval of the Israeli Security Cabinet, which was the body with the legal authority to decide about such an attack in order for Israel to destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor. In terms of Securitization Theory, since according to the Israeli law, the Security Cabinet is the body with the legal authority to authorize military strike to eliminate the Syrian nuclear reactor, it performed the role of the **Legal Audience** that needed to be persuaded for executing a securitization act. Eventually, after the Security Cabinet granted its approval to destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor, Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircrafts bombed the reactor and the securitization move was successfully completed.

Theoretically, operation "Outside the Box" comprises two dimensions of the securitization process. The first dimension is a dialog between Israeli Prime Minister Olmert (Securitizing Actor) and US President Bush (Political Audience). The Second dimension is dialog between the Israeli Prime Minister (Securitizing Actor) and the Israeli Security Cabinet (Legal Audience).

Figure 1: The Dimensions during Israel's Securitization in Operation "Outside the Box"

<i>Securitization Dimension</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Legal</i>
<i>Securitizing Actor</i>	Israeli Prime Minister	Israeli Prime Minister
<i>Audience</i>	American Administration	Israeli Security Cabinet

In implementing Securitization Theory's analysis tools, this chapter describes the sequence of events that led to the bombardment of the Syrian nuclear reactor, from its discovery by the Israeli intelligence until the Israeli Security Cabinet's decision to eliminate the Syrian reactor. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this thesis there was still no access to the official minutes of the Security Cabinet discussions, which has still remained confidential in terms of censorship. Thus, this chapter is mainly based on (1) interviews with Israeli decision-makers at the time; (2) biographies of decision-makers on both the Israeli and American sides; and (3) books, articles, films and other documentary publications about how Israel destroyed the nuclear reactor in Syria in 2007.

The "Begin Doctrine" and Operation "Opera" in 1981

Operation "Outside the Box", in which Israel destroyed the nuclear reactor in Syria in September 2007, was not the first time that Israel eliminated a nuclear reactor of an enemy state. After discovering that Iraq was building a nuclear reactor with the help of France, Israeli Prime Minister at that time, Menachem Begin, who perceived the Iraqi nuclear reactor as an existential threat to the State of Israel, decided that the facility must be destroyed (Nakdimon, 2007, p. 83). But there were those among the

political and military echelons who thought otherwise, claiming that the nuclear reactor in Iraq did not yet pose an existential threat to the State of Israel (Nevo, 2016, pp. 116-117). For example, Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Yadin, who previously served as IDF chief of staff, believed that Israel should not attack the reactor. This was also the opinion of some of the heads of the military echelon, including Mossad Director Yitzhak Hofi, who claimed that it would take a long time for the reactor to become operational and pose a real danger. Deputy Prime Minister Yadin also believed that an Israeli attack on the reactor in Iraq could lead to a confrontation of "nuclear preventive strikes" between the superpowers, in which the Soviet Union could attack sensitive sites in Israel (Nakdimon, 2007, p. 90). Defense Minister Ezer Weizmann also opposed the bombing of the Iraqi reactor, fearing that its destruction by Israel would harm the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 115-116).

Concurrently with the diplomatic efforts to persuade France to stop aid to Iraq, Israel has taken various steps to thwart the Iraqi nuclear program. For instance, on April 6, 1979, Mossad agents destroyed parts of the reactor core that was intended for Iraq, manufactured in a factory in Toulon, France (Nakdimon, 2007, p. 97; Bergman, 2018, pp. 343-344). Later on, in the summer of 1980, Mossad agents killed three Iraqi scientists associated with the Iraqi nuclear program (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 125-127; Bergman, 2018, pp. 349-353). However, Mossad Director Yitzhak Hofi knew that these actions would not completely stop Iraq's nuclear program. Hence, in October 1980 Hofi told Israeli Prime Minister Begin that the only way left to exterminate this existential threat is to bomb the reactor from the air (Bergman, 2018, p. 353).

In order for Israel to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor, Begin had to obtain the approval of the Security Cabinet, which has the legal authority to go to war or launch such a military operation. Thus, on October 14, a Security Cabinet meeting was held, during which Begin called for the destruction of the nuclear reactor in Iraq. Perceiving the Iraqi nuclear reactor as a security threat to the State of Israel, Begin warned ministers that Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein would not hesitate to drop an atomic bomb on Tel Aviv and kill 300,000 people. In addition, Begin noted that it would be better to attack quickly before the reactor becomes operational, as bombing a hot reactor could cause a radioactive disaster (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 168-169).

Despite Prime Minister Begin's determination to destroy the nuclear reactor in Iraq, there was no consensus at that meeting, as voices were heard against an Israeli attack. Although he concluded that the only way to destroy the reactor was by military action, Mossad Director Hofi opposed an Israeli strike at the time. Since a month earlier, the Iran-Iraq war broke out, Hofi argued that action should not be taken against Iraq while there is war within the Arab world. The director of Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate, known by its Hebrew acronym Aman, Yehoshua Sagi also opposed an Israeli strike, asserting that it would lead to an end of the Iran-Iraq War, and then both countries would divert their resources against Israel. Moreover, Sagi indicated that there is plenty of time until Iraq would be able to acquire nuclear weapons, estimating that it would take roughly 5-8 years (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 169-171).

Deputy Prime Minister Yadin also objected to Israeli action to destroy the reactor, fearing a Soviet intervention against Israel in retaliation. Yadin was also concerned that the use of American weapons to destroy the reactor could lead to a slowdown in

aid from Washington. Therefore, the Deputy Prime Minister preferred to continue with political pressure over the military option. In addition, Yadin claimed that it would reunite the Arab world, which was very conflicted at the time:

"If Iraq has such a weapon, it will be difficult for Israel to live with it, and everything must be done against it. But the current timing is not good, and there is no need to hurry and make a decision right now. The Iran-Iraq war is very convenient for us, and the current timing is the worst" (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 170-172).

Compared to the heads of the Mossad and Aman and Deputy Prime Minister Yadin, who all expressed their opposition to an Israeli attack on the nuclear reactor in Iraq, IDF Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan was adamant in favor of an Israeli strike:

"The assessment that the Iraqis have a few more years to go before they can produce a bomb can be refuted. The presence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Arabs will cause Israel to lose every initiative and every opportunity to stand its ground on any issue. We may even have to evacuate Jerusalem. In my opinion, due to the size of the territory and the number of populations, there is no possibility of coexistence in a balance of terror. For Israel, this is an existential danger" (Nakdimon, 2007, p. 171).

Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir also believed that it was time to destroy the nuclear reactor in Iraq:

"There can be no better timing than the current one. A war is raging in the area that we did not cause. It will make it difficult for an Arab action against us" (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 171-172).

Two weeks later, at a cabinet meeting on October 28, Prime Minister Begin reiterated his position that the nuclear reactor in Iraq must be destroyed as soon as possible:

"The hourglass hangs over our heads, and it is ticking. Somewhere on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris sit people plotting to destroy us, preparing the tools to carry out their criminal plot. Every passing day brings them closer to their goal. We need to ask ourselves, what does it mean for a country like Iraq to produce nuclear weapons? The meaning is: the danger to the lives of every man, woman and child in Israel. In five years, maybe just three years, the Iraqis will have two or three atomic bombs, each as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Saddam Hussein is a cruel dictator, with whose hands he murdered the best of his comrades, in order to seize power. He will not hesitate to use weapons of mass destruction, aimed at us. The use of such weapons against the concentrations of our civilian population will lead to bloodshed like no other since those days, in the 1940s (referring to the Holocaust). In the face of such danger, are we allowed to sit idly by? If Iraq has a nuclear weapon, it will have one of two consequences: either we will have to surrender to their demands, or we will risk mass destruction. Such a horror! From the day I learned of the Iraqi intent this does not give me rest. We have done much to delay these preparations, but a people does not live on borrowed time. It is time to make a decision. There is no way to delay the operation of the reactor except by military action" (Naor, 1993, p. 221; Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 176-177).

Eventually, after many discussions, realizing that the summer of 1981 is the deadline to eliminate the reactor in Iraq before it becomes hot, on May 3 the Security Cabinet

voted in favour of an Israeli strike (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 209-210). A month later, on June 7, IAF aircrafts destroyed the reactor (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 226-227).

Although he was in contact with the US administration, both Carter's and Reagan's, on the issue of the Iraqi nuclear program (Nakdimon, 2007, pp. 136-138, 185-186), Israeli Prime Minister Begin did not involve them at all in his desire to destroy the reactor. According to the testimony of the US President at the time of the destruction of the reactor in Iraq, Ronald Reagan, he was against an Israeli strike and did not know about it in advance:

"Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who informed us of the attack only after the fact, said that Israel had acted because of information it had received that the Iraqi plant was to be used to produce fissionable material for nuclear weapons for use against Israel. He said that French shipment of "hot" uranium had been scheduled to arrive soon and that if he had waited longer, he could not have ordered the bombing because the reluctant radiation would have drifted over Baghdad, Iraq's capital. I can understand his fear but feel he took the wrong option" (Reagan, 1990, p. 413).

In fact, Begin's decision not to inform the Americans about the bombing of the reactor stemmed from his fear that if he did so and the Americans were opposed, Israel would have to attack before it was ready (Katz, 2019, p. 99). Hence, in terms of Securitization Theory, an American support was not perceived as an essential for securitization by Israeli Prime Minister Begin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**. Thus, the US administration did not perform the role of the **Political Audience**. The only Audience that Begin needed its support for the suggested extraordinary measures to

eliminate the existential threat to Israel was the Security Cabinet, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**.

Strategically, the destruction of the reactor in Iraq actually led to the formulation of the informal doctrine, "the Begin Doctrine", which its essence is to prevent countries hostile to Israel calling for its destruction from developing a nuclear military capability (Yadlin, 2018). Thus, the second time Israel implemented the Begin Doctrine was in September 2007, when IAF aircrafts bombed the nuclear reactor built by the Assad regime in Syria.

Israel Discovers the Syrian Nuclear Reactor

Suspicious about Syrian nuclear activity began in summer 2006. The Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate discovered that the Syrians were constructing an isolated facility, concealed in a valley so it could not be seen from the ground, in northeastern Syria in Deir ez-Zor not far from the Euphrates River (Limor, 2018; Katz, 2019, p. 32; Makovsky, 2012; Caspit, 2018; YNET, 2018). What made Aman also very suspicious was Syria's growing and covert relationships with North Korea (Katz, 2019, p. 33). Shortly afterwards, Aman Director Amos Yadlin, who was among the eight pilots who destroyed the nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981, presented his suspicions to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Ehud Olmert, according to which Syria is operating in the nuclear field. However, Yadlin still did not have any substantial proof in his hands to conclude that the facility discovered in the Syrian Desert was indeed a nuclear reactor (Olmert, 2021; Yadlin, 2020; Katz, 2019, pp. 34; YNET, 2018).

On November 1, 2006, Aman's Research Division released a formal document, indicating that the assessment in which Syria is conducting covert activities in the nuclear field is strengthened (Sharon and Menashe, 2018). Nevertheless, the conventional thinking among the Israeli intelligence community during that time was that Syria was not holding any scientific nor logistical ability to build a nuclear reactor (Katz, 2019, p. 35). Thus, when Aman Director Yadlin shared the information with Mossad Director Meir Dagan, telling him about the suspicions that Syria was building a nuclear reactor, the latter bluntly rejected the former's assumption asserting that such a scenario is not realistic. "There are no bears nor reactors", Dagan replied dismissively (Yadlin, 2020; Drucker, 2018; YNET, 2018; Caspit, 2018). Also Mossad Deputy Director Ram Ben-Barak believed at that time that it was not possible for Syria, a country that is well covered in terms of intelligence by the Israeli intelligence services, to set up a nuclear reactor without Israel's knowledge (Sharon and Menashe, 2018; Shumpalvi, 2018b). Yadlin also presented his suspicions about Syria to US Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, who visited Israel in December. Negroponte was surprised that this information was not presented to him a day before, when he met Mossad officials, who as stated held a concept that Syria could not develop nuclear capabilities (Yadlin, 2020; Katz, 2019, p. 35).

Despite the prevailing perception that there is no chance that Syria is developing a nuclear capability, Aman Director Yadlin thought that something was not right about the Syrian facility, which was isolated in the middle of the desert without any real purpose. Eventually, Yadlin persuaded Dagan, who was most preoccupied then with the Iranian nuclear program theme, to try and obtain more information about the facility in Deir ez-Zor (Yadlin, 2020; Katz, 2019, pp. 35-37).

In fact, Yadlin's stubbornness to check whether there is nuclear activity in Syria was not an accident. Aman director well remembered the lesson of December 2003, when Israel was surprised by the fact that a hostile country like Libya had made significant progress toward nuclear capability (Katz, 2019, p. 33). For Israel's fortune, the Libyan dictator Gaddafi eventually announced that he was giving up his nuclear program. Nevertheless, at that period there was a kind of mental fixation in Aman branches regarding the possibility of a nuclear program in Syria. Similar to the well-known conception before the 1973 Yom Kippur War of Aman director at that time, Eli Zeira, in which the Egyptians would not go to war against Israel, Aman director in 2002-2006, Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash, believed that Syria was not developing any nuclear capability. In fact, already in 2004, Israel received intelligence reports that the Assad regime in Syria was trying to achieve nuclear weapons. In response, Aman Director Ze'evi-Farkash rejected this possibility, arguing that there is not enough evidence for this hypothesis. Thus, Ze'evi-Farkash concluded that the possibility that Syria is developing a nuclear reactor is illogical (Herzog. M, 2018). Even when an appeal was made to him from the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman, Yuval Steinitz, to examine the possibility that Syria is trying to acquire nuclear weapons, Aman Director Ze'evi-Farkash contemptuously dismissed any such possibility (Ramon, 2020, p. 2153). However, It is noteworthy that during that period, the Israeli intelligence community was focusing both on the struggle against the Iranian nuclear program and on curbing the second Palestinian intifada, as Palestinian terrorist attacks were a daily routine in Israeli cities. Therefore, without underestimating the fact that Syria has set up a nuclear reactor in its territory under the nose of Israeli intelligence, it can be assumed that Syria was not a top priority of the Israeli intelligence community during

that era (Maariv, 2018). In any case, in order not to wake up one day and discover that a neighboring enemy state had succeeded in developing a nuclear capability, Ze'evi-Farkash's successor decided to take the necessary precautions. Thus, on his first day as Aman director in January 2006, Yadlin instructed his men to survey the entire Middle East region and examine all the countries that there is no possibility to think they might develop nuclear weapons (YNET, 2018).

In order to confirm Aman's suspicions that the facility built in the Syrian Desert was indeed a nuclear reactor, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert authorized the Mossad at the beginning of March 2007 to conduct a clandestine operation in Vienna, Austria. The plan was to hack the computer of the Atomic Energy Commission director in Syria, Ibrahim Othman, who was about to visit the city that period (Katz, 2019, p. 30; Olmert, 2018, p. 195). The operation ended successfully and the findings were striking, as Mossad agents found in Othman's computer images of the facility being built in Deir ez-Zor. These photos provided clear evidence that left no doubt to the Israelis that Syria was building a nuclear reactor (Katz, 2019, pp. 40-41; Drucker, 2018; Limor, 2018; Makovsky, 2012). In addition, the images illustrated that the facility constructed in Syria was in fact an almost exact replica of the Yongbyon nuclear reactor in North Korea. Another photo copied from Othman's computer showed that he was standing next to Chon Chibu, who was one of the scientists in charge of the Yongbyon nuclear reactor (Drucker, 2018; Katz, 2019, p. 17).

On March 13, Mossad Director Dagan reported the striking findings to Prime Minister Olmert, who immediately decided to destroy the facility (Drucker, 2018; Olmert, 2018, pp. 195-196; Katz, 2019, pp. 41-43). For Olmert, the situation in which Syria holds

nuclear weapons posed an existential threat to the State of Israel. According to Olmert, there were two main reasons why the reactor must be eliminated. First, it was impossible to predict how the Assad regime, which instituted a dictatorship in Syria, would behave had it held nuclear capability. Second, a nuclear bomb in the hands of Syria would significantly undermine the stability in the Middle East, an area that is already saturated with conflicts. Therefore, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert had no doubt that the reactor should be destroyed (Olmert, 2020).

In the first phase, Prime Minister Olmert decided to share information about what was happening in Syria with his senior ministers- Defense Minister Amir Peretz and Foreign Affairs Minister Tzipi Livni- together with the heads of the defense establishment- IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi and the director of the Israeli Security Agency, known by its Hebrew acronym Shin Bet, Yuval Diskin (Olmert, 2018, p. 198; Katz, 2019, p.102). Moreover, in order to decide on the procedure for demolishing the reactor, a small forum was established that included the heads of the military echelon and the Israeli Atomic Energy Committee director, Dr. Gideon Frank (Olmert, 2018, p. 198). Olmert, who of course did not question the reliability of the information collected by the Mossad and Aman, also set up an investigation team to verify whether the information about the reactor was accurate. The team of experts, led by Maj. Gen. Yaakov Amidror, former head of the Research Division in Aman, concluded that the facility in Syria is a nuclear reactor and if its construction is completed, it will pose a real and immediate danger to the existence of the State of Israel. Therefore, the team of experts recommended, the facility should be destroyed immediately (Olmert, 2018, pp. 198-199).

The second phase was to decide how and when to exterminate the facility. Hence, Jerusalem began to prepare for a situation in which it would have to act alone to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria. Although it was clear to the Israeli decision-makers that the nuclear reactor being built in Syria poses an existential security threat to the State of Israel and therefore the facility must be destroyed, it was necessary for them to look at the situation broadly and think about the consequences resulting from the attack before deciding when and how to act. First, it was important to know when the reactor would be operational, or in professional parlance when the reactor becomes hot. Since attacking a hot reactor can certainly lead to an ecological and environmental disaster, it is therefore better to destroy the facility before it becomes active. Second, there was a great concern among the Israeli decision-makers that had Israel eliminated the reactor in Syria, the Assad regime, in cooperation with the Lebanese Hezbollah organization, might react and launch a wide-ranging confrontation against Israel. Taking this possibility into account, there was a concern among the Israeli political and military echelons that Israel might find itself fighting another war, shortly after the end of the Second Lebanon War, which back then was not perceived by the Israeli public as a successful operation (Shumpalvi, 2018a; Limor, 2018).

The concern among Israeli decision-makers was based on the fact that the Syrians, who feared that the United States and Israel were about to launch a comprehensive offensive against Iran, Syria and Lebanon, began to prepare militarily and position their entire missile arsenal aimed at Israel. There was a high probability that an Israeli operation to destroy the reactor would lead to the outbreak of war with Syria, during which the Syrians would launch on Israel hundreds of missiles, each of half a ton

warhead with a precision of 300 meters. Thus, it was clear to Israeli decision-makers that the Syrian missiles would hit strategic facilities in Israel, and that the Israeli home front would suffer more severe damage in comparison to what Israel experienced in the summer of 2006 against Hezbollah (Olmert, 2020; Drucker, 2018; Olmert, 2018, p. 207; Yadlin, 2020).

Hence, it was necessary to check whether the IDF had the ability to go to another war in such a short time, and not less important, to end this war when there will no doubt that Israel won it. In that sense, Aman Director Yadlin described that the Israeli decision-makers had two goals: the first was to destroy the reactor, and the second was to prevent war or a large-scale confrontation with Syria and Hezbollah following its destruction. Fearing that an Israeli attack on the reactor would lead to the outbreak of war with Syria and Hezbollah, the idea was to destroy the reactor with a "low signature," meaning that the Assad regime could contain the Israeli attack and thus entering a "deniability zone". The fact that there were few secret partners in Syria for the existence of the reactor only strengthened this hypothesis. In addition, the Israeli assumption also based on the fact that since Assad deviated from the rules of nuclear proliferation he signed, an act that is tantamount to defiance of the international system, in case he had responded to such an Israeli attack, the international community would ask the Syrian despot what was he hiding in the destroyed facility. In that sense, if Assad had claimed that the building was an innocent facility, he would have no justification for starting a war with Israel. Thus, if Israel had not declared that it destroyed the reactor, Assad would contain the incident and not retaliate (Shumpalvi, 2018a; Limor, 2018).

Eventually, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's instructions to the military echelon were very clear. Olmert's requests were to make every effort so that the bombing of the reactor would not lead to a war with Syria, which had a ballistic missile arsenal that could hit any target in Israel. Yet, in case that the eruption of war with Syria is inevitable, Olmert added, this upcoming confrontation must be conducted successfully and should not end like the Second Lebanon War, which was perceived as an unsuccessful war among the Israeli public (Limor, 2018). In that context, while Olmert believed from the outset that the preferred way to destroy the reactor would be in aerial action, he was not locked into a particular pattern of action. Thus, Olmert instructed the military echelon to prepare a number of alternative operations. The guiding criteria of each action was to destroy the reactor while maintaining a low Israeli signature in order not to be drawn into a broad confrontation with Syria following the attack (Olmert, 2021; Olmert, 2018, p. 198).

Operationally, the military echelon presented three barriers to an Israeli strike on the reactor. The first was that the Syrian nuclear reactor must be attacked before it becomes operational. The assessment of the Israeli Atomic Energy Committee was that once the reactor becomes hot, it will not be possible to bomb the facility. In the case of the Syrian reactor, which was built near the Euphrates River, the experts estimated that bombing it could cause radioactive contamination that would endanger a population of millions. Therefore, the aim was to understand what the deadline for the attack was before the reactor became operational (Olmert, 2018, pp. 232-233; Yadlin, 2020; Shumpalvi, 2018a; YNET, 2018; Sharon and Menashe, 2018). The second obstacle was that an Israeli attack must be carried out before the Syrians know that Israel knows about the existence of the reactor. The concern was that if

Assad found out that his nuclear project had been exposed, he might place missile batteries to protect the reactor or even establish a kindergarten in its compound in order to make it difficult for Israel to destroy it. The third hindrance was that an attack should be executed before winter time. Given the possibility that a war with Syria could have started following an Israeli strike, the IDF would be more comfortable conducting a war in favorable weather conditions, especially in the context of the Air Force. Therefore, the recommendation of the military echelon was that the attack should be executed no later than September-October (Yadlin, 2020; Shumpalvi, 2018a; YNET, 2018; Sharon and Menashe, 2018).

Realizing that the political echelon would give an order to the military echelon to destroy the reactor, the IAF began to prepare itself for a military strike. IAF Commander Eliezer Shkedy understood that the Air Force must totally change its priorities and focus on two things: first, preparing an operational plan to destroy the reactor; and second, since the destruction of the reactor could lead Syria and Hezbollah to start a war, preparing the Air Force for a comprehensive confrontation (Shkedy, 2021; Giladi, 2018).

Israel turns to the US Administration

At the beginning of April, after having reached the conclusion that the information regarding the Syrian reactor was reliable, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert decided to share that matter with the American administration, headed by US President George W. Bush. In fact, most members of the military echelon, including Aman Director

Yadlin and IAF commander Shkedy, advised Olmert not to contact the Americans. Their main argument was that Israel should face the Syrians alone, otherwise it might lose its deterrence in the face of its enemies (Yadlin, 2020; Shkedy, 2021). "If we are unable to defend ourselves on our own in the case of Syria, then we have a big problem," Yadlin told Olmert (Yadlin, 2020). However, Israeli Prime Minister had two main reasons why it was necessary to involve the American administration in the reactor issue. First, Olmert wanted to "embroil" the Americans, believing that had the Americans destroyed the reactor, it could be a clear warning signal to Iran, which itself sought to reach a nuclear capability. Thus, Olmert perceived, the Iranians would understand what could happen if they continue their efforts to reach nuclear weapons (Olmert, 2018, p. 200; Olmert, 2020). Second, Israeli Prime Minister believed that the chance for retaliation from Syria was lower if America would execute a military strike to eliminate the reactor (Katz, 2019, p. 100). In essence, Olmert's decision stemmed from his political perception at the time that the Americans should be involved in the matter of the nuclear reactor in Syria. In fact, Olmert's political perception was opposite to Israeli Prime Minister in 1981, Menachem Begin, who decided not to involve US President Ronald Reagan before Israel eliminated the Iraqi reactor in 1981.

In mid-April, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert dispatched Mossad Director Dagan to Washington in order to share the intelligence about the Syrian nuclear facility with the Americans (Olmert, 2018, pp. 198-199; Katz, 2019, pp. 15-17). Actually, the first American official to hear about the existence of the reactor in Syria was US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who visited Israel at the same period. Therefore, Olmert asked Defense Minister Peretz and Aman Director Yadlin to briefly update Gates about the discovery of the facility in Syria (Katz, 2019, pp. 48-49; Yadlin, 2020). Arriving in

Washington in mid-April, Dagan met with US Vice President Dick Cheney, CIA Director Michael Hayden, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and his deputy Elliott Abrams. The Americans were shocked by the information Dagan introduced to them, demonstrating the fact that Syria was constructing a nuclear reactor with North Korean technical assistance (Drucker, 2018; Bush, 2010, pp. 420-421; Abrams, 2013, p. 227; Cheney, 2011, pp. 465-467). A few days later, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert spoke with US president Bush and asked him that America would bomb the Syrian reactor. Bush replied that he needed some time to look at the intelligence and promised Olmert to give him an answer very soon (Bush, 2010, p. 421; Katz, 2019, p. 47). After he had thanked Bush, Olmert clarified to him that by the end of August-beginning of September, the reactor must be destroyed in one way or another before it becomes operational (Drucker, 2018).

In terms of Securitization Theory, the Israeli Prime Minister Olmert performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**. In addition, based on Olmert's political perception that US President Bush's support was essential for conducting a securitization act, the latter performed the role of the **Political Audience**.

Olmert turns to the Israeli Security Cabinet

After he had shared the information regarding the Syrian nuclear reactor with the US administration, Prime Minister Olmert began to expand the circle of secret partners. Thus, during the period from late April to early May, Olmert began in sharing information with members of the Israeli Security Cabinet and informing them that

Syria had constructed a nuclear reactor on its territory (Katz, 2019, p. 102-106; Melman, 2018).

In Israel, the authority to go to war or launch a military operation rested on the hands of the Security Cabinet. By Israeli law, the Security Cabinet needs to include the prime minister, the foreign minister, the defense minister, the internal security minister, justice minister and the finance minister. Usually, the prime minister also adds different party leaders who are part of the coalition, assuming they do not already fill one of these positions (Katz, 2019, p. 101). Thus, in order for Israel to bomb the Syrian nuclear reactor, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert had to obtain the approval of the Security Cabinet, which in terms of Securitization Theory performed the role of the **Legal Audience**.

In practice, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert updated the heads of the US administration before updating all the ministers of the Israeli Security Cabinet. According to Olmert, the reason for this was the desire to maintain maximum secrecy, which was very critical to the success of the operation. Olmert was very worried about leaks that could reveal to the Syrians that Israel knows about the reactor's existence. According to Olmert, while the Israeli Security Cabinet consists of more than a dozen political figures, the US administration was a very small forum. Hence, the chances of a leak from the American side were extremely low (Olmert, 2020).

In order to understand the decision-making process in the Security Cabinet, it is important to know that from the beginning of the Security Cabinet's discussions regarding the Syrian nuclear reactor, the Second Lebanon War, fought that previous summer of 2006, hung heavily in the air. Today it is quite clear that the Second

Lebanon War brought back Israeli deterrence against Hezbollah, and as evidence, the border with Lebanon has been quiet for 15 years. Yet in the summer of 2007, the prevailing opinion among the Israeli public was that the campaign in Lebanon was unsuccessful, especially regarding the IDF's difficulty in reducing Hezbollah's rocket attacks against the country. In that context, since an attack against Syria so soon after the war in Lebanon could again expose the country to another disastrous war, Olmert wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page in the event that a war with Syria would erupt (Katz, 2019, pp. 101-102).

Wishing to avoid another war, the Israeli Security Cabinet members hoped that the Americans would be the ones to take on the task of destroying the nuclear reactor in Syria. The Israeli assumption was that a US operation to destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor would eliminate the danger of a war with Syria, which would most likely erupt following an Israeli attack instead (Herzog. I, 2018; Limor, 2018). According to Isaac Herzog, who was a member in the Security Cabinet, its ministers did not demand from Olmert to ask the Americans to destroy the reactor. Yet, due to the concern of war with Syria, as the fresh memory of the Second Lebanon War was constantly hovering in the air, there was a preference among the Security Cabinet's ministers that the Americans would destroy the reactor rather than Israel (Herzog. I, 2018).

In early June, signs began to indicate that the Syrians were moving toward the time when the reactor would become operational. One of the indicators for understanding when the reactor turns hot was the construction of a water pipeline between the reactor and the Euphrates River, on the banks of which the Syrians built a water pumping station. One canal was used to transport water from the Euphrates for

cooling the reactor's core. The second canal was for transporting hot water from the reactor back to the river. While nuclear reactors usually have chimneys used to evaporate the hot water, the Syrians used water channels to hide the fact that the facility is actually a nuclear reactor. Thus, the construction of the water pipeline was the sign that time was running out. Had Israel wanted to destroy the reactor before it got hot, Jerusalem would have to attack soon (Melman, 2018; Katz, 2019, p. 62; YNET, 2018). Therefore, since the Israeli decision-makers assumed that a hot reactor could not be destroyed, preparations for the possibility of Israeli action to destroy the reactor began to accelerate. While waiting for the American response, hoping that the Bush administration would eventually take on the task of eliminating the nuclear reactor in Syria, IDF Chief of Staff Ashkenazi and IAF Commander Shkedy said the political echelon that the IDF is ready for to strike. In addition, the two made it clear that the IDF is operationally ready in the event of a war with Syria following the demolition of the reactor (Limor, 2018; Melman, 2018; Cohen, 2018). Thus, there was widespread consent at both the political and military echelons that action must be taken quickly before the reactor turns hot. However, the entry of the new-old defense minister, Ehud Barak, into office on June 15 has changed the discourse.

Barak replaces Peretz as Defense Minister

Ehud Barak's entry into the post of defense minister stemmed from his victory in the elections for the chairman of the Labor Party. After winning the elections held on June 12, Barak replaced the ousted Labor chairman Amir Peretz in his position as defense minister. To Barak's credit, he had a rich resume of operational experience gained

during his military and political career, including as a fighter and commander of the General Staff Reconnaissance Regiment, better known as "Sayeret Matkal". Barak, who previously served as prime minister, defense minister and IDF chief of staff, planned and participated in many daring operations, and was considered the most decorated soldier in IDF history.

Barak, who was already informed by Olmert about the discovery of the reactor in May, believed that the reactor in Syria posed an existential security threat to the State of Israel and should therefore be destroyed. Same as Prime Minister Olmert, Barak thought that a nuclear reactor in the hands of Syria, a country with close alliance with Iran and Hezbollah, would dramatically alter the balance of power in the region. For Barak, the question was not about whether Israel should take military action to eliminate the reactor. The question was how and when to strike (Barak, 2018, p. 411). However, while Olmert and the heads of the military echelon sought to destroy the reactor within a few weeks, Barak suggested that additional alternatives to destroying the reactor be explored. In essence, the new defense minister believed that since there was a period of three months left until the reactor would be operational, it was hence appropriate to act with discretion rather than recklessly (Barak, 2018, pp. 411-412; Barak, 2021b; Eilon, 2018; Azulai, 2018).

In order to fully understand the situation that arose following Barak's appointment as defense minister, It is important to remember that the Second Lebanon War, which as stated was perceived back then as an unsuccessful campaign by Israel, was in the background of the decision-making process. In Barak's opinion, this war was conducted recklessly and hastily by Prime Minister Olmert, who according to Barak

"went to war without knowing he was getting into it". In this context, Barak was very concerned about Olmert's discretion and hence demanded to consider all the operational alternatives before militarily acting (Barak, 2021b; Eilon, 2018; Azulai, 2018).

Barak was not the only one who opposed the bombing of the reactor at that time. Also Shaul Mofaz, a former defense minister and IDF chief of staff, was not decisive in his support to eliminate the reactor, concerning that an Israeli action would lead to war with Syria, to which Israel is not yet ready (Ramon, 2020, p. 2161; Drucker, 2018). Without a doubt, Mofaz perceived that the reactor posed an existential threat to the State of Israel and that it should be destroyed. However, during the Security Cabinet meetings, Mofaz contended that the likelihood of war with Syria should be considered, indicating that there should be no assumption that there would be no Syrian retaliation after an Israeli operation to eliminate the reactor in Deir al-Zor (Mofaz, 2021).

According to Barak, when he entered his position as defense minister, he discovered that there were two operational plans to destroy the reactor. Operationally, Barak claimed that in order to destroy the reactor the action plan must meet two conditions: first, an absolute certainty of the demolition of the facility; and second, low signature action to reduce the likelihood of a Syrian response leading to a large-scale confrontation. In addition, worrying that a clash with Syria and Hezbollah would ensue, Barak urged not to execute an attack to destroy the reactor in Syria until the IDF was operationally ready for war. Barak's demand was that if a war broke out following the destruction of the reactor, the IDF would be well prepared for it and at

the end there would be no doubt that Israel had ended the war with a complete victory. From a professional perspective, Barak believed that the two plans were operationally not good enough, arguing that none of them met the two main criteria for a successful outcome. To Barak's understanding, while the first plan would not certainly destroy the reactor but very confidently would not lead to war, the second plan in contrast, would confidently destroy the reactor, but there was a reasonable probability that a war would break out with Syria afterwards. Hence, since according to Barak's judgment, there was still a period of three months until the reactor in Syria would become operational, he instructed the military echelon to prepare operational plans that would meet two criteria: certain destruction of the reactor and an Israeli strike with a low signature that would prevent the possibility of war with Syria (Barak, 2018, pp. 411-412; Barak, 2021b; Eilon, 2018). In addition, Barak claimed that the IDF was not ready yet for another war, which could break out following an Israeli operation to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria (Azulai, 2018). In retrospect, Barak realized that he had provoked resentment among Prime Minister Olmert's entourage and among some members of the military echelon, who in turn planned the operation about two and a half months before he took office as defense minister. Yet at the same time, Barak claimed that it was essential to prepare an operation that both ensured that the reactor would be destroyed and that no war would break out with Syria (Barak, 2021b; Eilon, 2018).

Despite the reasoned version of Defense Minister Barak, whose conduct actually caused a delay in carrying out the operation to demolish the reactor, other figures from the political and military echelons, including Prime Minister Olmert, present a different version. From an operational perspective, Prime Minister Olmert and other

Security Cabinet ministers, including most of the military echelon chiefs, were astonished when Defense Minister Barak claimed that the operation to demolish the reactor could be delayed until spring 2008, time when the reactor would probably be operational. Moreover, they were even shocked to hear Barak's argument in one of the meetings in early July that a hot reactor could also be destroyed (Drucker, 2018; Ramon, 2020, p. 2158), indicating that in certain situations it could be bombed without causing a serious radioactive leak (Herzog. I, 2018; Katz, 2019, p. 173).

Apart from the certain probability that in the spring of 2008 the reactor will be active, and then it will be difficult to bomb it for fear of a nuclear leak, the military echelon preference was that had a war broke out with Syria following an Israeli operation to destroy the reactor, it would be better for it to take place before the winter, and thus maintain the huge advantage of the Israeli Air Force over Syria other Arab countries. In this context, Olmert noted that had Barak had asked him to postpone the operation until the beginning of September, the deadline before the reactor becomes active, he would have certainly agreed to the request. But complying with Barak's demand to wait until spring was unacceptable not only for Olmert, but also for most members of the political and military echelons, who all understood that the State of Israel would not want to destroy a hot reactor and cause large-scale environmental damage (Olmert, 2020).

Regarding his statement that a hot reactor could be bombed, Barak claimed that had Israel discovered the reactor when it was operational, it would destroy it anyway. (Drucker, 2018; Barak, 2021b; Katz, 2019, pp. 173-174). In response, Prime Minister Olmert replied to Barak that had Israel had no choice, it would destroy a hot reactor

as well. But in case we were bombing a hot reactor, the whole world would have come to us claiming why we did not eliminate the facility when we knew it was not yet operational (Olmert, 2020; Drucker, 2018; Katz, 2019, p. 173-174).

It is noteworthy that, as noted by IDF Chief of Staff Ashkenazi, Mossad Director Dagan and Aman Director Yadlin, none of the senior members of the military echelon agreed with Defense Minister Barak's arguments (Drucker, 2018). Whether Barak did fear that the IDF was not operationally prepared for war and therefore demanded that the operational execution be postponed, others, including Aman Director Yadlin, thought that Barak's arguments were absurd and that he was motivated by personal considerations against Prime Minister Olmert (Limor, 2018). The prevalent suspicion was that Barak wished to postpone the strike, because he hoped that Olmert might resign following the Winograd Commission inquiry, which investigated the failures of the Second Lebanon War. Thus, the destruction of the Syrian reactor would be attributed only to Barak (Katz, 2019, p. 128). In the political context, it is important to remember that at that time, summer of 2007, Olmert's political status among the Israel public was low following the Second Lebanon War, while Barak's prestige was at its heyday immediately after his political comeback. A poll conducted in mid-June showed that if elections had been held, the Kadima Party led by Olmert would have received only 11 seats, while the Labor Party led by Barak would have won 29 seats (NRG, 2007).

Yet, other Security Cabinet ministers and also figures in the defense establishment, including IAF Commander Shkedy, believed that Barak had delayed the process because he wanted to get to the point where all the plans to destroy the Syrian reactor

were ripe for action. In that context, Shkedy claimed that it is difficult for him to believe that someone who was the IDF chief of staff, prime minister and defense minister, would act out of personal and political motives, and not out of motives related to the sanctity of dealing with an existential threat to the State of Israel (Shkedy, 2021).

It seems that had Defense Minister and Labor Chairman Barak wanted to delay the operation, he would at least have tried to persuade Labor's Security Cabinet ministers to support his line of action. But according to Isaac Herzog, who was one of Labor's Security Cabinet ministers and was politically close to Barak, the latter did not address the issue and refrained from seeking his support (Herzog. I, 2018). The fact that Barak did not even try to contact Herzog on the matter strengthens the former's version, in which Barak encouraged the military echelon to examine and verify all the operational alternatives to the demolition of the reactor. However, according to Olmert, Barak did address other Security Cabinet ministers, including Justice Minister Professor Daniel Friedman, contending that the attack on the Syrian reactor could lead to the destruction of the State of Israel (Olmert, 2018, p. 220; Olmert, 2020).

In any case, in terms of Securitization Theory, while there was a consent between Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak that the Syrian nuclear reactor poses an existential threat to the State of Israel, the disagreement between the two gentlemen was regarding the extraordinary measures needed to securitize the threat.

America refuses to strike, yet does not oppose an Israeli Action

In the meantime, while Jerusalem waited for an answer from Washington, the US administration contemplated how to act concerning the Syrian reactor. The general working assumption in the Bush administration was that had the US refused to destroy the reactor, Israel would exterminate it itself. This was the impression that Hayden and Hadley received from Mossad Director Dagan during their April meeting, and that is what Bush understood from his conversations with Olmert. In addition, the Americans believed that eliminating the reactor would be an easy task for the Israelis (Katz, 2019, p. 56).

On June 17, President Bush convened his national security team to discuss the issue of the Syrian nuclear reactor. From an American perspective, Syria and Iran, two rouge countries that worked to obtain nuclear weapons, were the world leaders in terrorist financing. At that time, Syria allowed the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq who fought against the U.S. military in the country. Iran, in turn, provided funding and weapons to those fighters, including supplying arms to the Taliban in Afghanistan, another arena in which the U.S. fought against extremist forces. In addition, Syria and Iran logistically supported Hezbollah, which acted against Israel and undermined the stability of the pro-American government in Lebanon. Hence, the Bush administration perceived that Syria and Iran posed a major threat to American interests in the Middle East (Cheney, 2011, p. 470).

Nevertheless, the opinions among the US administration regarding what to do regarding the Syrian nuclear reactor were divided. On the one hand, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice vehemently rejected

any US military action, arguing that it could lead to an outbreak of war in the region had Syria decided to respond (Katz, 2019, pp. 63-64; Rice, 2011, p. 708; Gates, 2014, p. 173). In addition, Secretary of State Rice, who lost faith in the IDF's power following the Second Lebanon War (Drucker, 2018; Makovsky, 2012; Katz, 2019, p. 64), was concerned that the bombing of the reactor would lead to the failure of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, which were supposed to resume at the Annapolis conference in November 2007 (Katz, 2019, pp. 67-68). Secretary of Defense Gates added another argument, in which America already had two ongoing wars in Muslim countries, and thus it was considered by most countries as too quick to use military force. Hence, Gates contended that the last thing America needed was to attack another Arab country. Alternatively, asserting that he agrees that the reactor should not be allowed to become operational, Gates suggested exposing what the Syrians and North Koreans had done and focus on their violations of UN Security Council resolutions and the nonproliferation treaty. *"I suspect no one in the world doubts this administration's willingness to use force, but better to use it as the last resort than as a first step"*, concluded Gates. He even urged President Bush to *"tell Israeli Prime Minister Olmert that America will not allow the reactor to become operational but Israel must allow us to handle this in our own way. If they do not, they are on their own. We will not help them"*. Gates even recommended US President Bush to indicate Israeli Prime Minister Olmert that if Israel had continued on its own military path to destroy the reactor in Syria, he would endanger Israel's entire relationship with the United States (Gates, 2014, pp. 173-175).

On the other hand, Vice President Dick Cheney believed that the United States should destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria. Cheney argued that an American military

operation on the facility would send an important message not only to Syrian and North Korea, but also to the Iranians, with whom the Bush Administration conducted a diplomatic negotiation in order to end their nuclear program. According to Cheney, an American strike against the Syrian reactor would demonstrate to Iran that the US government was serious. *"I believed that our diplomacy would have a far greater chance of being effective if the North Koreans and Iranians understood that they faced the possibility of military action if the diplomacy failed"*, said Vice President Cheney. Taking into account that the destruction of the reactor may lead to the outbreak of another war in the Middle East, Cheney believed that the dangers of allowing the Syrian-North Korean nuclear project to go forward were far greater than the prospect of a wider conflict, as no action would lead the Syrian to become a nuclear state. In that context, Vice President Cheney recommended to President Bush that America needs a more effective and aggressive strategy against Syria and Iran, and the first step would be to eliminate the Syrian reactor (Cheney, 2011, p. 468-470).

Thus, the Americans had a dilemma. From a military perspective, there was no operational problem to destroy the Syrian reactor. Yet, from a diplomatic view, bombing a sovereign country without a justified warning would create a severe blowback to the government. Hence, since a covert mission to eradicate the reactor was too risky, the favorite option was to brief US allies on the intelligence, jointly expose the facility and demand that Syria shutter and dismantle it under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Thus, had Syria refused to dismantle the facility, the American would have a clear public rationale for a military action (Bush, 2010, p. 421). Moreover, the CIA's intelligence assessment had a low confidence of a Syrian nuclear weapons program (Hayden, 2016, pp. 261-262). This

argument only enhanced Bush's decision not to bomb the reactor but to first follow a diplomatic path (Bush, 2010, p. 421). This point was very crucial for the Bush administration, since the intelligence failure that led to the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was still hanging in the air. Therefore, US President Bush had to know with an absolute certainty that Israel's information was accurate because he could not, politically or publicly, launch a military operation without an accurate intelligence justification (Katz, 2019, pp. 44-45).

On June 19, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert arrived in Washington and met with US President George W. Bush. At their meeting, Olmert told Bush that time was running out as the reactor would be soon operational, and if America wants to destroy the reactor, it must do so soon. In response, Bush indicated to Olmert that the CIA had indeed confirmed that Syria was building a nuclear reactor, but it could not find any weapon team, which is the group that typically takes the enriched material and assembles a nuclear warhead for a ballistic missile. This situation, Bush explained, would make it difficult for him to approve a military strike. Olmert replied that even if that could not be guaranteed, Syria's nuclear program still posed an existential threat to Israel and the entire region. The Israeli prime minister also argued that eradicating the reactor in Syria would be a great opportunity for the United States to send a signal to the Iranians, who also have their own nuclear ambitions. In the end of their meeting, even though that Bush said to Olmert that he needed more time and he would give him an answer in the coming weeks, Olmert got the impression that Bush's hands were tied, as the war in Iraq and the faulty intelligence that led to the war, left the American president without much maneuverability. The fact that US intelligence agencies were not giving Bush a written recommendation due to the missing weapons

team tied the president's hands even more (Olmert, 2018, pp. 203-205; Katz, 2019, pp. 111-113). On the same day, Olmert also met with Vice President Cheney. In their meeting, Olmert reiterated his argument that the existence of a nuclear reactor posed an existential threat to the State of Israel, and urged the US Vice President that the United States would take military action to destroy the facility. The Israeli prime minister also told Cheney that if the US does not destroy the Syrian reactor, Israel will do it itself. In addition, Olmert said that in order not to provoke a Syrian response, Israel would remain silent and not publicly declare that it was behind the attack on the reactor (Cheney, 2011, p. 471; Katz, 2019, pp. 114-115).

A few days after Olmert's visit, US President Bush convened his team to reach a decision regarding the nuclear reactor in Syria. At the end of the discussion, Bush favored the position of most of his administration and decided that the US would first follow the diplomatic path (Katz, 2019, pp. 115-118). Eventually, on July 13, Bush spoke with Olmert and informed him about his decision not to bomb the reactor and alternatively to follow the diplomatic route. The American president stated that he cannot justify an attack on a sovereign nation unless his intelligence agencies confirm that it is a nuclear weapon program (Bush, 2010, p. 421). Alternatively, Bush proposed to send US Secretary of State Rice to Israel to hold a joint press conference in order to press Syria to destroy the reactor (Drucker, 2018; Olmert, 2018, p. 205). Bush's answer made Olmert very frustrated, as he hoped that the Americans would take the mission to destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor. Moreover, the Israeli prime minister understood that the Bush Administration was still living under the trauma of their failure to assess intelligence before the war in Iraq and therefore feared from acting militarily against Syria (Olmert, 2018, p. 204). Eventually, Olmert replied to Bush: "George, this leaves

me surprised and disappointed. And I cannot accept it. We told you from the first day, when Dagan came to Washington, and I have told you since then whenever we discussed it, that the reactor had to go away. Israel cannot live with a Syrian nuclear reactor; we will not accept it. It would change the entire region and our national security cannot accept it. You are telling me you will not act; so, we will act. The timing is another matter, and we will not do anything precipitous". Bush replied to Olmert and said: "the United States will not get in your way", acknowledging that Israel had a right to protect its national security. After the conversation, Bush instructed his administration to maintain absolute silence, and to ensure that Israel could carry out its plan (Abrams, 2013, pp. 246-247; Olmert, 2018, pp. 205-207; Katz, 2019, pp. 120-122; Drucker, 2018).

For Olmert, as soon as US President Bush informed him that the United States would not destroy the reactor and that the diplomatic option was preferred by the US administration, it was clear to him that Israel would eliminate the reactor itself. According to Olmert, he did not ask for or wait for approval from the US President to act on this issue (Olmert, 2020; Olmert, 2018, p. 206). In addition, the American president did not object that Israel would destroy the reactor itself, and as stated, he even instructed his people to keep the information secret and to assist the Israelis. However, Olmert claims that had the reactor not been in such advanced stages of construction and had the threat not been existential and immediate, it is very likely that his set of considerations would have been different had the American stance against Israeli attack been decisive (Olmert, 2020). In any case, Olmert's decision stemmed from his political view that the Americans should be involved in the issue of the Syrian reactor. Olmert's decision was different from that of another prime

minister, Menachem Begin, who as stated, chose not to involve the Americans in his wish to destroy the Iraqi reactor in 1981. Thus, the facts are that Israeli Prime Minister Olmert chose to share with the Americans and even asked them to bomb the reactor. Similar to the Israelis, the Americans believed that the nuclear reactor in Syria was an existential threat. However, both disagreed on how to overcome the threat and hence the latter refused to destroy the reactor. Eventually, since the Americans did not oppose Israel destroying the Syrian nuclear reactor, Olmert decided that Israel would eliminate that security threat itself.

Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, the **Securitizing Actor**, performed by Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, convinced the **Political Audience**, performed by US President Bush, that the Syrian nuclear reactor posed an existential threat to the State of Israel. In fact, as soon as Olmert asked Bush to destroy the reactor, the latter performed the role of the Political Audience. However, in regards to the extraordinary measures of how to deal against this security threat, while the American president supported a diplomatic path, he did not negate an Israeli military attack to destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor. Moreover, the fact Bush instructed his administration to help Israel and not reveal the reactor's existence only reinforces the claim that Olmert actually received some kind of support, or at least the US administration's lack of resistance to an Israeli strike on the nuclear reactor in Syria. Thus, based on Olmert's political perception that viewed the American support (or non-resistance) as necessary for the destruction of the Syrian reactor, President Bush's lack of resistance that Israel will destroy the reactor itself actually gave the political legitimacy that Olmert needed to execute his securitization act.

Olmert convinces the Israeli Security Cabinet to strike

A few days after his conversation with US President Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert convened the Israeli Security Cabinet and briefed the ministers on the US administration's decision not to destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor. In essence, the Security Cabinet ministers were of the opinion that the reactor poses an existential threat to Israel and therefore it must be eliminated (Katz, 2019, pp. 102-105). However, as it has already mentioned above, there were disagreements in the Security Cabinet over how and when the reactor should be destroyed, especially between Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak. On the one hand, Olmert supported the destruction of the Syrian nuclear reactor as soon as possible. The Israeli Prime Minister's main concern was that until Israel could destroy the reactor, it would become operational, making its destruction cause heavy environmental damage that would harm hundreds of thousands of civilians. In addition, Olmert feared a situation in which Syrian President Bashar al-Assad would discover that Israel already knew about the existence of the reactor, and thus make it difficult for Israel to demolish it (Olmert, 2018, pp. 195-198). On the other hand, although he agreed with Olmert that the Syrian reactor must be eliminated, Barak, in implicit criticism of Olmert's conduct during the Second Lebanon War, felt that the latter was moving too quickly and was not considering all of the available military options to strike (Barak, 2021b; Katz, 2019, p. 126).

Simultaneously with the fierce dispute between Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak, the military echelon proposed operational plans for the destruction of the reactor in Syria. The central feature of each of the plans was to operate with a low

signature in order to prevent a Syrian response that could lead to a war. Although it is very likely that apart from the IDF, other organizations in the defense establishment, such as Mossad, offered additional plans to destroy the reactor with a low signature, Barak recounts two plans of action that were presented to him (Barak, 2021b; Eilon, 2018). The first plan was introduced to Barak by IAF Commander Shkedy, who felt that the former should be given the feeling that it would be possible to both destroy the reactor and prevent war (Shkedy, 2021). Shkedy's plan was an aerial operation with a low signature, in which a small group of fighter aircrafts would bomb the reactor. In this way, Shkedy thought, the reactor would be destroyed with certainty and that there was a high chance that Assad would contain the Israeli attack and would not retaliate. After presenting the plan to Barak, drawing it on a small napkin, Shkedy noticed that his interlocutor understood that IAF had an adequate operational plan for the destruction of the reactor with a low Israeli signature (Shkedy, 2021; Katz, 2019, p. 176).

Nevertheless, IAF Commander Shkedy was not the only one who introduced Defense Minister Barak an action plan to demolish the reactor with a low signature. According to Barak, Aman Director Yadlin also proposed an operation plan that would meet the two criteria of a low signature and the destruction of the reactor (Barak, 2021b; Eilon, 2018). Since the information on the nature of the operation remained confidential, it can be estimated that since Aman Director Yadlin was in charge of "Sayeret Matkal", the suggested plan was a ground operation in which a commando force would destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria (Makovsky, 2012). Compared to an aerial operation, a ground action has a significant advantage in that it leaves fewer Israeli fingerprints, and hence substantially reduces the probability of a Syrian response. However, there

are two prominent disadvantages in executing a ground operation: first, the amount of explosives that ground Special Forces personnel are able to carry with them for the destruction of the reactor is significantly smaller compared to the bombs dropped by fighter jets (hundreds of kilograms versus tens of tons, respectively); second, and no less important, there is a significant peril in sending dozens of Special Forces fighters to operate in a location in Syria at a distance of 450 km from Israel (Katz, 2019, pp. 169-170).

Towards the end of July, the dispute between Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak intensified. While Olmert, backed by the military echelon officials, urged to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria before it became operational and before the Syrians would be exposed to the fact that Israel discovered about the existence of the facility, Barak claimed that the IDF was not yet operationally ready for war and therefore the attack on the reactor should be postponed (Melman, 2018; Azulai, 2018). Barak also refused to accept the claim raised by the military echelon that the reactor would become operational when the reactor's cooling systems were connected to the water pipes from the Euphrates River. According to Barak, the fact that the water system is connected to the reactor does not mean that it becomes operational immediately. In addition, fearing that war would break out with Syria following an Israeli attack, Barak demanded an offensive option with a low signature, one that Assad could eventually contain (Azulai, 2018).

Defense Minister Barak's opposition to the operation to destroy the reactor in a short time was well illustrated during the Security Cabinet meeting held on August 1. During that meeting, after the heads of Mossad and Shin Bet recommended to the Security

Cabinet ministers that the reactor be demolished as soon as possible, IDF's Planning Directorate Director Ido Nehoshtan presented the IDF's recommendations. But when Nehoshtan began presenting the conclusions, according to which the IDF recommends destroying the reactor as soon as possible before it becomes operational, Defense Minister Barak silenced Nehoshtan and ordered him not to speak. In response, it was Prime Minister Olmert, whom the defense minister could not silence, who continued to read the IDF's recommendation. Afterwards, it was Aman Director Yadlin, who in a strong protest against Defense Minister Barak's opposition, passed his review and argued that the reactor should be bombed as soon as possible before it turns hot, indicating that any delay could be disastrous and cause irreversible damage (Olmert, 2018, pp. 213-215; Drucker, 2018; Caspit, 2018; Katz, 2019, pp. 174-175; Ramon, 2020, pp. 2159-2160). Barak, for his part, reiterated his position that although the reactor must be destroyed, it must be done at the right time and in the right way, stressing that the right moment to act has not yet come (Barak, 2021b; Azulai, 2018).

Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, urged the Security Cabinet, a body that performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, to securitize the Syrian nuclear reactor, by supporting a military strike on the facility. Yet Defense Minister Barak, who was a member in the Security Cabinet forum, argued that time is not ripe for executing the extraordinary measures suggested by Olmert, and therefore urged not to securitize the Syrian reactor at that stage.

In the meantime, in parallel to the Security Cabinet's discussions, and in light of the fear of bombing an active nuclear reactor, Israel continued its efforts to discover

whether the reactor was going to be operational any time soon. In August, an Israeli elite commando unit, Sayeret Matkal, went covertly close to the Syrian reactor and went back with pictures and soil samples, in order to find out whether the fuel rods had been installed, an important indicator for determining how close the reactor was to becoming operational. After the discovery of tiny traces of uranium in the soil samples, there were no doubts that the site was definitely a nuclear reactor, which is going to be hot very soon (Katz, 2019, pp. 159-163).

On August 8, a week after the tumultuous Security Cabinet meeting, another session was held in which Israeli Prime Minister Olmert conducted a geopolitical review of the Middle East, assessing the risks and chances in the event of an Israeli military operation to destroy the reactor in Syria. During his summary to the Security Cabinet ministers, Olmert indicated that although he does not want a war with Syria, it is likely to erupt even if the operation to eliminate the reactor would be carried out with a low signature. In addition, Olmert stressed that if Syria obtains nuclear capabilities, this could have a severe impact on the Israeli public and raise serious doubts about the continued existence of the State of Israel. Olmert also quoted part of a speech delivered by Syrian President Assad to the Syrian parliament on July 17, in which Assad indicated that within a few months the balance of power in the Middle East would change completely, a hint that Syria would soon possess nuclear capability. In summing up his remarks, Olmert emphasized that the military echelon claims that time is running out and that a military action is needed to demolish the nuclear reactor in Syria. Moreover, the Israeli Prime Minister noted that the military echelon indicated that it has the abilities to carry out the operation to destroy the reactor with complete success and with a minimum of risks. Thus, Olmert's main message to the Security

Cabinet ministers was that the nuclear reactor in Syria must be destroyed within a month, in a low-signature operation, and thus reducing the risk that Syria would start a war in retaliation (Olmert, 2018, pp. 217-219; Caspit, 2018). According to Isaac Herzog, who as mentioned was a member of the Security Cabinet, this meeting was the crucial one in which Olmert managed to tip the scales in favor of his position that Israel must destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria in a short time (Herzog. I, 2018).

But this did not end the dispute between Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak. After the Security Cabinet meeting, Barak sent a letter to Olmert, in which he claimed that the military echelon's assessment presented to the Security Cabinet was irrelevant, based on an old collection of slides, and did not express the defense minister's opinion. Barak also asserted in the letter that from an operational perspective, the IDF was not ready yet to attack Syria, recommending that it should be postponed until the IDF's offensive capability is ripe and its preparations for war are completed. In response, Prime Minister Olmert replied in a letter to Defense Minister Barak, in which he harshly criticized the latter for blaming the professionalism of the military echelon, indicating that Barak has no right to determine the position of the military echelon. In his letter, Olmert criticized Barak's conduct and noted that at most in his role as defense minister, he can only speak on behalf of the IDF, and not on behalf of the Mossad, the Shin Bet and the Atomic Energy Commission, which are under the responsibility of the prime minister. In summarizing his letter, Olmert made it clear to Barak that although it would be appropriate for the defense minister to support the demolition of the reactor, he would not hesitate to obtain the Security Cabinet's approval for the operation, which it is planned to be executed in early September, even if the defense minister opposes it. Eventually, Barak understood

Olmert's decisive message and informed him that when the Security Cabinet convenes to vote on the approval of the military operation to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria, he will vote in favor (Olmert, 2018, pp. 219-220, 225-226; Olmert, 2020; Caspit, 2018). Thus, this seems to have ended the clash between Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak. However, given it is well known that the dispute between Olmert and Barak arose against the background of the date of the destruction of the reactor, and in light of the political tension that existed between them, it is not inconceivable to argue that there may have been further disagreement between the two over how the nuclear reactor in Syria should be destroyed. As stated, Barak claims that the debate with Olmert was not only about the appropriate time to act, but also about the question of what is the best way to act (Barak, 2018, p. 411). Thus, while Olmert preferred a low-signature air operation (Olmert, 2018, p. 198), which would almost certainly destroy the reactor and prevent the risk of ground fighters, it is likely that Defense Minister Barak, who in the past was the commander of Sayeret Matkal and himself participated in many operations beyond enemy lines, preferred the ground option with the participation of special forces. If so, it is likely that not only the political rivalry and the question of when was the ripe moment to destroy the reactor were at the root of the controversy between the prime minister and the defense minister. Thus, it seems that also the operational matter of how to demolish the reactor clouded the relationship and mistrust between the Olmert and Barak.

On August 31, another meeting was held between Olmert and the military echelon chiefs, at which IAF Commander Shkedy presented the aerial plan for the destruction of the reactor. At the end of the meeting, Olmert announced that he would schedule a meeting of the Security Cabinet on September 5 to approve the operation (Olmert,

2018, pp. 220-221). But surprisingly (or because someone on the Israeli side thought the decision to destroy the reactor should be expedited), on September 4, a query was submitted to the Israeli embassy in the United States by an American journalist about the presence of a nuclear reactor in Syria (Drucker, 2018). Therefore, for fear that the Syrians would find out that their secret had been revealed and that Israel knew about the reactor, which would jeopardize the planned operation to destroy it, IDF Chief of Staff Ashkenazi asked to urgently convene the Security Cabinet to authorize the military echelon to destroy the reactor (Drucker, 2018; Limor, 2018; Sharon and Menashe, 2018). In this context, whether there was an appeal to the Israeli embassy, or whether it was just a pretext designed to ensure that IAF fighter jets take off for their mission in early September as Prime Minister Olmert wanted and planned, a decision would have to be made.

The next day, September 5, the Security Cabinet convened to reach a decision. At the meeting, IDF Chief of Staff Ashkenazi said that the IDF was operationally ready for action and recommended to the ministers that in light of the danger that the information would leak and that the chance of war was low, a decision should be made to attack the reactor tonight. In that context, Aman Director Yadlin confirmed that the chances are that Assad would contain and not respond to the attack as long as Israeli officials remain silent and do not embarrass Syria (Melman, 2018). Thus, Prime Minister Olmert asked the ministers to vote in favor of a resolution in which the Security Cabinet approves the military echelon to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria, and that the course of action and date will be determined by the prime minister in consultation with the defense minister and foreign minister. In the vote, all the ministers of the Security Cabinet voted in favor of the decision, with the exception of

the Minister of Internal Security Avi Dichter, who decided to abstain (Olmert, 2018, p. 227). In fact, Dichter believed that the nuclear reactor in Syria posed an existential threat to the State of Israel and hence thought that it must be destroyed. His abstention stemmed from the fact that he expressed complete distrust of Olmert's conduct in the context of the Second Lebanon War. In fact, there was a consent between Dichter and Barak regarding the Olmert's actions during the Second Lebanon War, as both of them claimed that the latter led Israel to war without knowing that he was entering it. At that crucial meeting, Dichter demanded that the Security Cabinet discuss all operational plans for the destruction of the reactor, and not to leave the authority to determine how to destroy the reactor only to the trio. Since Prime Minister Olmert refused to do so, Dichter decided to abstain. So abstention of Dichter, who in fact supported the destruction of the reactor, was in fact a protest vote against Olmert (Dichter, 2021). At the end of the Security Cabinet meeting, the trio forum met to confirm when and how to destroy the reactor in Syria. Eventually, the trio accepted the opinion of IDF Chief of Staff Ashkenazi, who recommended to implement IAF Commander Shkedy's plan according to which the reactor would be destroyed in an aerial strike that night, and approved the military echelon to act (Olmert, 2018, p. 227; Livni, 2021). Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, obtained the support of the Security Cabinet, which performed the role of the **Legal Audience**, to securitize the Syrian nuclear reactor.

That night, September 6, eight IAF fighter jets took off toward the nuclear reactor in Syria. Apart from hitting the target, IAF Commander Shkedy ordered his pilots not to shoot down enemy planes in order to prevent an escalation with Syria. After two hours

of flying, the planes reached their destination, dropped 17 tons of explosives over the nuclear reactor, which had been destroyed beyond repair. (Katz, 2019, pp. 185-188). After the destruction of the reactor, the main concern on the Israeli side was how Syrian President Bashar al-Assad would react. Will he contain the incident or will he respond by firing missiles at Israel, an event that could lead to the outbreak of war. Eventually, a few hours after the destruction of the reactor, Aman Director Yadlin estimated that the Israeli intelligence did not identify any conduct in Syria that might indicate a military response against Israel. Indeed, shortly thereafter, the Syrian government issued an official statement that an Israeli attack attempt using fighter aircrafts had failed, and the Israeli planes were expelled by the Syrian air defense. Thus, Aman's assessment that it would be possible to bring Assad into a "deniability zone" turned out to be accurate (Olmert, 2018, p. 229; Katz, 2019, pp. 241-242).

Conclusion

Operation "Outside the Box", in which Israel destroyed the nuclear reactor in Syria in 2007, is a case study that well illustrates the audience's model during the securitization process offered in this thesis. In the view of the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, the nuclear reactor in Syria posed an existential threat to the State of Israel. Hence, Olmert opted to securitize the reactor in conducting a military strike, which were the suggested extraordinary measures for executing securitization. Yet in order to implement his policy to securitize the nuclear reactor in Syria, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, had to obtain the approval of two types of audiences. First, due to Olmert's political perception that in

order to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria, Israel must obtain the support (or lack of resistance) of the American administration, US President George W. Bush performed the role of the **Political Audience**. Olmert initially hoped that the Americans would bomb the reactor themselves. However, although the US administration believed that the nuclear reactor in Syria did pose an existential threat to Israel, the Americans were anxious of being involved again in the war in the Middle East following the Iraq War, and therefore preferred first to act in a diplomatic route with the Syrians. When US President George W. Bush informed Olmert in July 2007 that the United States would not bomb the reactor, the latter responded that Israel would destroy the reactor itself. Since the American president informed the Israeli prime minister that the United States would not stand in Israel's way and assist it as much as needed, Olmert actually received the support (or at least its lack of resistance) of the Political Audience to his securitization act. Second, given the Security Cabinet is the body with the legal authority in Israel to authorize the military echelon to go to war or carry out a military operation such as attacking the reactor in Syria, Olmert had to obtain its approval. Thus, in terms of Securitization Theory, the Security Cabinet performs the role of the **Legal Audience**.

As the time approached for the reactor to become active, and in light of the fear that the Syrians would discover that Israel knew about the reactor's existence, the Security Cabinet eventually approved the military echelon in September 2007 to destroy the reactor. Thus, after IAF aircrafts bombed the facility and eliminated it, Olmert's securitization act was successfully completed.

Summary and Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to improve the theoretical understanding of the audience component in Securitization Theory and explore how securitization is conducted in Israel. For this purpose, a new conceptual framework for the audience component was developed, one that has the ability to identify which audiences the securitizing actor needs to persuade for conducting a successful securitization act. In order to create such a new audience conceptualization, this thesis suggested a unique combination between Securitization Theory and elements from the field of Political Psychology, in particular Perception and Misperception, an element that has a prominent role in identifying the audience component during the securitization process. In essence, the new audience model defined two types of audience, each based on different legitimacy to support a securitization act:

(1) **Legal Audience:** an entity, which according to the state's rules, has the legal authority to execute the relevant securitization act. Without this audience's support, the securitizing actor does not have the legal ability and legitimacy to conduct that relevant securitization act.

(2) **Political Audience:** an entity that its support (or lack of resistance) for securitization is both not required according to the state rules and is perceived by the securitizing actor and/or audience as an essential condition for successfully performing a securitization act. Without the political audience's support (or its lack of resistance), the securitizing actor and/or audience thinks that there is not sufficient legitimacy to conduct securitization.

In order to verify this new audience conceptualization, this thesis applied it to four case studies that occurred in Israel, a country that coped with many security challenges since its establishment. Each case study represents a different type of securitization act and different kind of threat.

In the first case study, *The Six-Day War: The Securitization of the Egyptian Army*, this thesis discussed how the State of Israel coped with the concentration of Egyptian army forces on Israel's southern border on the eve of the Six Day War in 1967, which was perceived by Israeli decision-makers as an existential threat to the State of Israel. After Egypt had concentrated its arm forces along the southern Israeli border, an act that was followed by the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's public declarations that its goal was the destruction of Israel, the Israel Defense Force (IDF), who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, perceived that the Egyptian army constituted an existential threat to the State of Israel and opted to securitize it. In order to eradicate this threat, the IDF suggested executing a preemptive war against Egypt, which were the extraordinary measures needed for securitization. But in order to launch a war against Egypt and thus to securitize the Egyptian Army, it was essential to obtain the support of two audiences. First, the IDF needed to obtain the support of the Israeli government, which was the legal body to authorize the IDF to go to war against Egypt. Thus, according to the conceptual framework of the audience component suggested in this thesis, the Israeli government performed the role of the **Legal Audience**. Second, perceiving the American support as an essential factor for securitization, the Israeli government conditioned its support for going to war only if the US administration supported the move and gave full backing to Israel. Hence, based on the political perception of the Israeli government, headed by Prime Minister Levi

Eshkol, that the Johnson administration's support is essential for securitization, the latter performed the role of the **Political Audience**. However, the Johnson Administration did not deliver the Israelis any act of support for an Israeli preemptive strike against Egypt. On the contrary, fearing that the United States would be dragged into war in the Middle East in addition to the Vietnam War, and even be involved in a confrontation with the Soviet Union, US President Johnson opposed an Israeli attack on Egypt. Nevertheless, based their opinion on a false interpretation, the Israelis perceived President Johnson's speech act as a lack of resistance for an Israeli securitization, and consequently, the Israeli government approved the IDF to preempt against Egypt.

In the second case study, *The Oslo Accords 1993-1995: The Securitization of the bi-National State*, this thesis explored how the State of Israel coped against the bi-national state threat. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, perceived the bi-national state option, in which there would be no solid Jewish majority within Israel, as an existential menace to Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state. In order to tackle this threat, Rabin promoted the Oslo Accords with the PLO for providing the Palestinian people an autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and thus creating a separation between Israel and the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thus ensuring a solid Jewish majority within Israel. In order to successfully securitize the bi-national state option, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin needed to convince two audiences. First, Rabin needed to obtain the support of both the Israeli government and then the Israeli parliament (Knesset). Without the support of these two audiences, which had the legal authority to approve an Israeli withdrawal from territory, the Oslo Accords would not have any

legal validity and the State of Israel cannot actually execute and implement any agreement. Therefore, in terms of Securitization Theory and as suggested by this thesis audience conceptualization, the Israeli government and Knesset performed the role of the **Legal Audience**. Second, although Israel independently conducted its own foreign policy, it was important for Rabin to coordinate most of his moves in the international arena with the Americans. Thus, since Rabin perceived Washington's support as an indispensable condition for any agreement between Israel and the Arabs, the Clinton Administration performed the role of the **Political Audience**. Eventually, after receiving both audiences' support, Israel signed three major agreements with the PLO during the years 1993-1995, at the end of which the Palestinian Authority was established, which effectively controlled 27% of the West Bank and 90% of the Gaza Strip.

In the third and final case study, *Operation "Defensive Shield": The Securitization of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority*, this thesis discussed how Israel dealt with Palestinian terrorism during the Second Intifada until Operation Defensive Shield. For Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the military echelon, both performed the role of the **Securitizing Actor**, Arafat and the PA perceived as a security threat to the State of Israel. Thus, opting to securitize Arafat and the PA, Sharon and the IDF suggested to conduct a large-scale military campaign inside the Palestinian territories in the West Bank to dismantle the Palestinian terrorism. In order to securitize Arafat and the PA, Sharon needed to convince two audiences: First, although Israel could have acted without the American support, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon perceived the backing of the Bush Administration, or at least its lack of resistance, as an essential condition for launching such an extraordinary measure. Hence, Sharon tried to convince US

President George W. Bush that Arafat and the PA are not partners for peace with Israel but are waging a terrorist campaign against the Jewish state. In securitization terms, since Sharon perceived the American President's support as essential for conducting a securitization act, the latter performed the role of the Political **Audience**. Practically, following the events of 9/11 and the capture of the Karine A ship, which led the Americans to change their approach to Palestinian terrorism while understanding that Arafat and the PA do not make any effort to stop Palestinian terrorism, Sharon perceived that the US administration supported Israel's right to defend itself and that US President Bush would not oppose Israel launching a wide-scale military operation in the Palestinian territories. Thus, Sharon realized that the US administration would not oppose Israeli action against Palestinian terrorism. Second, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon had to obtain the approval of the Israeli cabinet, which according to the Israeli law was the body with the legal authority to authorize such a military strike. Thus, the cabinet performed the role of the **Legal Audience** that needed to be persuaded for executing a securitization act. Eventually, after the cabinet granted its approval to Operation Defensive Shield, the IDF started its wide campaign to dismantle the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure.

In the fourth case study, *Operation "Outside the Box": The Securitization of the Syrian Nuclear Reactor*, this thesis explored how the State of Israel dealt with the construction of a nuclear reactor in Syria, which was perceived by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and other prominent decision-makers in Israel as a first-rate existential threat to the Jewish State and its citizens. In order to securitize that threat and thus destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, who performed the role of the Securitizing Actor, needed to persuade two audiences.

First, due to Olmert's political perception that in order to destroy the nuclear reactor in Syria, Israel must obtain the support (or lack of resistance) of the American administration, US President George W. Bush performed the role of the **Political Audience**. Olmert initially hoped that the Americans would eliminate the nuclear reactor in Syria themselves. Yet the Americans, who also perceived that the nuclear reactor in Syria an existential threat to Israel, were anxious of being involved again in the war in the Middle East after the Iraq War, and hence preferred first to act in a diplomatic route with the Syrians. Nevertheless, Bush did not oppose that Israel would destroy the Syrian nuclear reactor itself, thus providing Israeli Prime Minister Olmert the American lack of resistance (which is equivalent to support) of the Political Audience to Israel's securitization act. Second, Olmert needed to obtain the support of the Security Cabinet, the **Legal Audience**, which is the body with the legal authority in Israel to authorize the military echelon to attack the nuclear reactor in Syria. Eventually, as the time approached for the reactor to become active, and in light of the fear that the Syrians would discover that Israel knew about the reactor's existence, the Security Cabinet gave its approval to eliminate the reactor. Thus, after IAF aircrafts bombed the facility and eliminated it, Olmert's securitization act was successfully completed.

Practically, tailoring the audience conceptualization of the thesis, Israel's unique case illustrates that the support of the Legal Audience, whose legitimacy derives from the Israeli law and performed by the political echelon's formal bodies (cabinet, government and parliament), is essential for executing securitization. In fact, an analysis of all four case studies clearly demonstrates that without the support of the **Legal Audience**, which is carried out by the political echelon elected (from the Cabinet

to Parliament) depending on the type of extraordinary measures (from military measures to peace agreements), securitization policy cannot be executed. Thus, without the consent of the legal public, the State of Israel cannot launch a military operation, cannot go to war against an enemy state, nor can it sign peace agreements, which are also a tool for dealing with existential security threats.

In addition, the support of the **Political Audience**, whose legitimacy stems from the political perception of the Israeli leadership and performed by the American administration, plays no less important role in the Israeli decision-making process when it comes to the theme of security. In practice, an analysis of the four test cases clearly illustrates that the position of the US administration has played an important and sometimes even critical role in the Israeli decision-making process when it comes to dealing with existential threats. Thus, while in the Oslo peace process the American support was key element to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who perceived the coordination of his political moves with the United States as essential, in the other three case studies in which Israel used military means to deal with security threats, the Israeli knowledge or perception that the US administration did not oppose Israeli action was a key element in the Israeli decision to securitize the threat. In the event of the destruction of the nuclear reactor in Syria, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who initially hoped that the Americans would destroy the reactor, actually received American support for Israeli action from US President George W. Bush. In the case of the Six Day War, the Israeli government, which perceived the American support as a necessary condition for an Israeli action, decided to support going into the Six Day War only because it perceived the Americans did not oppose Israeli action. And also in the case of Operation Defensive Shield, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's perception that at

that time, when Palestinian terrorism attacked Israeli cities and when the Americans realized that Arafat and the PA were conducting a terror campaign against the Jewish state, the Bush administration will not oppose Israel launching a military operation in the Palestinian cities, was an important component of the Israeli decision to securitize Arafat and the PA.

Conclusions and Insights

An analysis of the four case studies presented in this thesis leads to a number of main insights regarding the role of the audience during the securitization process in particular, and regarding the theoretical understanding of Securitization Theory in general.

First, this thesis confirms the argument of Securitization Theory, in which a security threat is a subjective (and intersubjective) term. Based on each person's perception whether subject X is a threat or not, while Person A perceives subject X as an existential threat, Person B contends that subject X is not a threat at all. The case of Operation "Defensive Shield" specifically illustrates this argument: while Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon perceived Arafat and the PA as a security threat to the State of Israel, his predecessor, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, perceived Arafat and the PA as partners for peace with Israel. The case study of the Oslo Accords also supports the argument that a security threat is a subjective (and intersubjective) term: while opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu asserted that the Oslo Accords posed an existential threat to the State of Israel, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin believed that the

Oslo Accords were essential to curb the bi-national state idea, which was perceived by him as an existential threat to the State of Israel.

Second, this thesis illustrates that peace agreements can also be extraordinary measures for conducting securitization. While the conventional way of dealing with security threats seems to be mostly a military action, as the three case studies presented in the thesis clearly illustrate (Operation "Outside the Box", The Six-Day War, and Operation "Defensive Shield"), the analysis of the Oslo Accords case study clearly proves that peace agreements can be also an extraordinary measure for executing securitization. Thus, in order to curb the bi-national state option, in which Israel would lose its Jewish majority, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin promoted the Oslo Accords with the PLO with the aim of establishing independent Palestinian autonomy for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. By creating a separation between the Palestinians and the State of Israel, Rabin opted to ensure a solid Jewish majority in Israel and thus ensure the future of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. Thus, the Oslo peace agreements that Israel signed with the PLO were in fact the extraordinary measures for the securitization of the bi-national state option.

Third, this thesis emphasizes that the audience component and its role during the securitization process is much more complex. Thus, the new conceptual framework of the audience component developed in this thesis asserts that the legitimacy for conducting securitization stems from both the state law and the political perception of the securitizing actor and/or the audience. Hence, based on this understanding and while applying the division to the two types of audiences, Legal and Political, scholars

are able to identify which entity or figure performs the role of the audience component and why. Assuming that the new audience conceptual framework offered by this thesis is not perfect, this conceptualization undoubtedly improves the theoretical understanding of the audience component during the securitization process, particularly assisting scholars to identify who the relevant audiences are that needs to be convinced in order to execute a successful securitization act.

Fourth, this thesis claims that similar to a security threat, which is in fact a subjective term, the support (or lack of resistance) of the audience during the securitization process also has a subjective character. The case study of the Six Day War shed light on the fact that there are two kinds of support provided by the audience component during Securitization. While the first type is defined as **Objective Support**, which is a clear and explicit support that cannot be ambiguous, the second kind is defined as **Subjective Support**, which can be interpreted differently by the securitizing actor and the audience. In essence, as the dialog between the Israeli government (Securitizing Actor) and the American Administration (Political Audience) demonstrated, the former believed that he received the latter's endorsement for conducting a securitization act. In other words, the securitizing actor interpreted the audience's speech act as a support, while in fact this audience did not provide any of its acceptance for securitization. Thus, in terms of securitization theory, contrary to the Israeli government's decision to authorize to IDF to launch a war against Egypt, which was characterized as an **Objective Support** for securitization, the American's respond can be characterized as a **Subjective Support**. Consequently, this case study clearly emphasizes that in order to investigate comprehensively the process of securitization, it is not only sufficient to find out whether the audience granted its

support for securitization or not; it is also a necessary condition to explore how the securitizing actor itself interpreted the audience's reply.

In conclusion, the original contribution to the academic literature of this thesis is both theoretical and empirical. First, by developing a new conceptualization for the audience component that can assist scholars to identify who the relevant audience are that needs to be persuaded for conducting a successful securitization act, this thesis can contribute to the theoretical understanding of the role of the audience component in securitization theory, strengthen the fruitful combination between the fields of IR and Political Psychology, and enhance the theoretical knowledge in other IR theories concerning conflicts, peace processes, and world politics. Second, by exploring the securitization process in Israel, this thesis may contribute to the field of Israeli Studies, especially concerning how the State of Israel copes with existential security threats and the extent to which the US administration influences Israel's decisions on national security matters.

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